

All six articles were originally published in German. Unfortunately, works composed in German have a virtually imperceptible impact on Anglo-American scholarship. Consequently, my research has exerted little influence on the debate conducted within this tradition. Admittedly, it is more concerned with the authenticity than with the oral or written character of the transmission of knowledge. And since scholars in the Arabic-speaking world (if they do so at all) take note only of Western studies on Islam written in English, my work has remained almost unknown in the Arabic-speaking scholarly world. I fear that my book in French, *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l'Islam*, has fared little better than my articles in German with which, in terms of subject matter, it has much in common (though an English translation of this book is in preparation). An English translation of my work was, therefore, a desideratum and I was extremely gratified when Dr James Montgomery, a respected colleague and dear friend, informed me two years ago that, thanks to the Wright Studentship Fund of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Cambridge, he was in a position to realize this project which he had conceived much earlier. Accordingly, my sincerest thanks go to the *spiritus auctor* of the project and editor of the volume. I would also like to thank him for writing an introduction which engages with my work so closely and with such richness of concept and content, and for compiling the Glossary and Index. Equal gratitude is owed to Dr Uwe Vagelpohl who mastered the difficult task of translation with commendable patience. He also compiled the many changes and revisions with consummate skill and who carried out the Bibliography and assumed responsibility for the electronic preparation of the manuscript. I shall remember our collaboration with pleasure.

Finally, I should like to thank the managers of the Wright Studentship Fund for their generous financial support, the publisher, Routledge, and the editors of the series, Roger Allen, Philip Kennedy, and James Montgomery, for including the book in their series.

Gregor Schoeler
Basel, July 2005

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The narrator of L. P. Hartley's novel *The Go-Between* (1953) declares that, "The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there." Among the many different sights, practices, customs, habits, and behaviors which might baffle us on our visits to any past, we may encounter some which appear reassuringly familiar, from the recognition of which we can derive reassurance, if not pleasure. Yet the "familiar" and the seduction of recognition are the Scylla and Charybdis of any journey into any past, for our contentment may beguile us, despite our best efforts, into unwittingly misconstruing the "familiar," be it through anticipation, for example, or through the suppression of the unfamiliar in that which is but superficially familiar, or through the elision of the unfamiliar by garbing it in the guise of the familiar.¹ As an example of the last of these, we can take our various, intellectual and scholarly, responses to the phenomena of variety and variation in the textual remnants of any literate society, in our case the societies and individuals who together constitute what we refer to as "early Islam," the Islam of the first three Muslim centuries (seventh to ninth centuries AD).

I Fluidity, variety, and variation

Let me review some instances of textual variety and variation and the responses which they may elicit in Arabic writings from the period.

Among the many fascinating items which Arabic-speaking intellectuals of the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries took from the medical and philosophical tradition of Late Antiquity and which proved to be an especially fecund nexus of diverse appeal is a text (in Arabic terms, a *ḥabār*; see the Glossary) which deals with the physiological and psychological aspects of love-sickness. This text has been edited, translated, and comprehensively and imaginatively studied by Gutas and Biesterfeldt (1984) who christened the text "The Malady of Love," identifying some 17 versions across five centuries from its earliest appearance in Arabic in the gnology of the Christian translator and scientist Hunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 260/873 or 264/877) to its inclusion in the biographical lexicon of the "martyrs of love" by 'Alā' ad-Dīn Muḡulāy (d. 762/1361).²

The editors identify four basic versions of the text: a "short version" which belongs to the gnomological tradition in which it is attributed to Hippocrates; a "long version" belonging to what they term the "paramedical" tradition, the attribute of which is "varied"; a "hybrid version" put in the mouth of Pythagoras and exclusive to the *ṣaḍab* tradition (see the Glossary), to which Mughīṣay's text belongs; and a "dramatized version" developed in the "occult tradition" in which Aristotle is quizzed by various "pupils" (Zosimus, Agathodaimon, etc.) to explain love-sickness. Through the judicious construction of a very complicated stemma, the editors are able to map the wanderings of this text through its various inflections by diverse aspects of the intellectual tradition, thus emphasizing (though not accounting for) its extraordinary appeal:

We are thus in possession of a late Alexandrian text, in Arabic translation, which through a skilful combination of disparate elements in Greek medicine and the *Problematia Physica* presents the most systematic and consistent account of the malady of love given in humoral medicine. Paradoxically, because it apparently originated outside Greek medicine, proper and hence outside a medical context, it found its way neither into Byzantine nor into Arabic medicine and remained, in Greek, essentially a literary text transmitted in the *Problematia* or gnomological traditions. In Arabic translation, the same lack of an established and binding medical context facilitated this time its pseudepigraphic diffusion and paved the way for its integration in the literary and occult traditions in various forms of inventive adaptations.³

The variety of this micro-unit is thus an inventive variation. Because of the broad diversity of its appeal, it is a fluid text, and by virtue of its fluidity it is messy. And as readers of the tradition we might be inclined to misunderstand the creative potential of the essential messiness of the *ḥabār*. In these respects, the "Malady of Love" is emblematic of the majority of micro-units within Arabo-Islamic oral and literary traditions, principal among which are the narratives of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions, known in Arabic as the *ḥadīṭ*. Chapter 5 of this book is an exemplary analysis of the potential for metamorphosis which such units of information enjoyed in the classical Islam of the traditionalists, the tradents, carriers, of the Prophetic Tradition.

Longer texts, often presenting themselves in the form of "books," can also be characterized by the fluidity of the "Malady of Love" micro-unit, and the nature of many such works as manifestations or residues of Islamic pedagogical practices is brilliantly studied by Gregor Schoeler (hereafter GS). Yet this is only one type of fluidity among many. Another type of fluidity is perhaps more accurately described as "agglutination," an instance of which is the disquisition on sexual abstinence by the fourth/ten century Christian Aristotelian, the Baḡdādī philosopher Yahyā 'bn 'Adī (d. 363/974).⁴

This composite text exists as a singleton manuscript copied in the year 1725 AD and now kept in Cairo. The manuscript itself divides the text into two sections, Yahyā's treatise and a response of a companion to three questions which Yahyā had posed. In fact, it is composed of four parts: (1) the disquisition (*muqālaḥ*) itself; (2) Yahyā's quotations from an anonymous communication (*muḡālaḥ*) written by one of his friends (friend a) to another (friend b) in response to Yahyā's own *muqālaḥ*, a letter which apparently contained objections voiced by friend a to friend b as a consequence of friend b's misinterpretations of friend a's development of the arguments Yahyā expressed in his treatise (1), though Yahyā does not appear to have had access to the full texts of the correspondence; (3) three questions on the matter under discussion posed by Yahyā addressed to the correspondents; and (4) a copy (*nuṣṣaḥ*) of one correspondent's reply to Yahyā's three questions and Yahyā's systematic rejection of his objections and amplification of his principal arguments.

This work presumably exists in the form in which Yahyā 'bn 'Adī left it, but it can hardly be said to be a "book" in any standard (modern) sense of the word. Indeed, reading it as a "book" has led a number of scholars completely to misconstrue it and has generated a considerable degree of confusion as to the accurate identification of what in the words of Griffith (forthcoming) is:

A virtual glimpse into a living, inter-communal discourse from the past in progress . . . for Yahyā and his friends the conversation was itself the philosophy, or perhaps the philosophy was the idiom of the conversation.

Thus, simply, the act of reading is itself an act of interpretation and a series of responses which are all too fallible.⁵

This fallibility, however, is something which we, as modern readers far removed (in time, space, experiences, assumptions, and beliefs) from the materials which we read, share with our predecessors who themselves formed part of the very tradition which we are reading. In other words, members of the indigenous tradition were themselves readers of that tradition, and as such just as prone to erroneous readings, though not necessarily or always errors of the same stamp as those to which we are prone.⁶ This emerges most acutely and with crystal clarity from GS's review in Chapter 6 (pp. 106–115) of the tradition's responses to the lexicon of al-Ḥallī ibn Ahmad (d. between c. 160/776 and 175/791), the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* (*The Book of [the Letter] 'Ayn*). This review allows us to speculate (though GS does not allow himself this luxury) as to the reasons why the indigenous tradition responded to the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* in the ways in which it did, be it inspired by idealizations of the figure of al-Ḥallī, determined by the visions of scientific and epistemological progress which were subscribed to, or occasioned by reading the lexicon as a "book" in the sense of a fully finished product endowed by its creator with a distinct shape, acts of reading enhanced by fluctuations in the very conception of "composition" (*taṭwīṭ*, *tasnīf*: see the Glossary). These speculations are not, of course, mutually exclusive.

At the same time as negotiating these complex and tangled issues of messy and varied textual traditions, in the case of pre-modern Islam we must begin properly to recognize the importance of a nexus of notions which depend upon what we might refer to as "authorized" fluidity; in other words, in many cases there was no one single act of authoring or moment of authorization whereby a composer endowed his work with his stamp or seal of authorship.

Thus, the first universal history written by a Christian in Arabic was the *Kiṭāb al-ta'wīḥ al-maḡmū'ah 'i-taḥqīq wa-'i-tasdiq* (*The Book of Chronology Collected on the Basis of Verification and Assent*) by the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, Sa'īd ibn Bīṭīq, also known by his Greek name, Eutychius (d. 328/940). When at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century, Yaḥyā 'l-Anṣakī came to continue this world chronicle, he was confronted by a variety of versions of the work:

Before I embarked upon the composition (*ta'wīḥ*) of this book, I scrutinised a number of copies (*muṣaḥif*) of the book of Sa'īd ibn Bīṭīq. I discovered that some of them contain the history as far as the beginning of the caliphate of al-Qāḥir, i.e. the year in which Sa'īd ibn Bīṭīq was made patriarch of Alexandria [i.e. 321/933]. But, [various] additions had been appended to some [copies] for [one] reason [or another] on the part of the compiler⁷ of the book, though they were not contained in any other copy.⁸ So I looked at the copy of the original (*ṣaḥf*) itself and other copies of the book—the [material] which they contained ended during the caliphate of al-Rāḍī, i.e. the year 326 AH. It is on the basis of this copy in particular that I have begun this book, because it is the most complete copy in terms of exposition (*ṣūrah*) and the most proximate [to Sa'īd ibn Bīṭīq] in time. Now I think that the reason for the deficiency of the final portions of some of these copies and the incompleteness of their coverage of the contents of the copy of the original is that the book was copied at various times during the lifetime of its composer (*muṣallif*); this copy then became known as it passed around among the people; and each one of the copies in its entirety contained the history up to the time in which it was written.⁹

Thus, at the very heart of a great many texts which belong to the first four centuries of classical Islam there exists not one but a multiplicity of copies, in a way which poses a significant challenge to the very notion of editing a text based on the construction of a stemma which will give the scholar access to the copy of the work closest to the writer in time (and thus, it is presumed, in intention).¹⁰

The validity of the traditional methodology of text editing developed by classical philology, and expressed with consummate concision by Maas (1958), has been attacked in a variety of intellectually cognate disciplines as well as in Classics. Reynolds and Wilson, for example, countenance horizontal as well as vertical transmission, and have wondered whether "all surviving manuscripts can be traced back to a single archetype, datable to the late ancient world or early Middle Ages."¹¹

In the study of the early medieval history of Europe, a group of scholars from the Universities of Utrecht, Vienna, Leeds, and Cambridge have instituted a forum for the study of issues subsumed under the categories of "Texts and Identities," central to which is the realization that the differences which the manuscripts, scribal traditions, and recensions of a work represent are fundamentally of greater hermeneutic significance than the realities which they agree on.¹² Thus, the traditional practice of text editing, predicated upon the elimination of these differences, is not only a distortion but also an impoverishment of the multiplicity of the early medieval world. This is not, however, a call for the abandonment of the construction of stemmata, but for a rearticulation of the uses to which such stemmata are put, based on modifications of the epistemological assumptions (presumptions?) on which the technique is based. Stemmata are, thus, one of the several mechanisms available for the investigation of a text's past and not the exclusive means at our disposal for its recreation.¹³

These four instances, albeit largely chosen at random, are, in varying degrees and with differing emphases, representative of a significant proportion of the textual heritage of early Islam, which, in the matter of the production of poems, narratives, texts, and documents, was a culturally dynamic and kaleidoscopic blend of writing and orality, a blend which was never stable, but was rather protean in its creative possibilities, as a range of inflections of which a thinker and his followers could avail themselves in the expression and production of his ideas. When we add to this blend the emergence of the religious doctrines of Muḥammad as the "illiterate" Prophet¹⁴ and the inimitability of the Qur'ān, it becomes clear just how vital the interfaces between the oral and the written were for early Islam. It is the enduring merit of the articles by GS translated into English in this volume to have offered scholarship a foothold in the charting of these possibilities, in a series of studies which are exemplary for the careful meticulousness with which the evidence is reviewed and presented.

II Gregor Schoeler

The published works of GS impress for a number of reasons, principal among which is the imposing range of topics and subjects which they cover.¹⁵ Central to his project is the study of classical Arabic poetry, in particular the poetry of Abū Nuwās (d. c.200/815) (1990, 2001), parts of whose collected poems (*diwān*) GS has edited (1982), but also the genre known as *zahrīyā*, descriptions of flora (see his article in *Et*², vol. 11, pp. 399–402), and the *qifāh* (see the Glossary) (see his article in *Et*², Supplement, pp. 538 ff.), the poetry of Ibn ar-Rūmī (d. c.283/896) (1990b), and especially the strophic poetry of Islamic Spain, al-Andalus (1991) (see, for example, his articles *Muwashshah*, *Et*², vol. 7, pp. 809–812, and *Zadīqal*, *Et*², vol. 10, pp. 373–376). Equally prominent are the works on the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (for summaries of which see Schoeler 2002a, 2003 and the article '*Urwa b. al-Zuhayr* in *Et*², vol. 10, pp. 910–913), in many ways

a development of his studies of the history and genesis of the transmission of knowledge represented by the articles in this book. It is no exaggeration to say that it is this range of scholarly experiences, especially those gained through working with manuscripts and poetry, which has enabled GS not only to perceive the transmission of knowledge within early Islam as a matrix of multifarious and often contradictory phenomena but also to control his lucid presentation thereof.

III The development of the Islamic sciences: a snapshot

It is the hope of the author and the editor of this book that it be as accessible as the detailed treatment of its subjects allows to scholars not familiar with Islamic studies but with an interest in the oral and the written.¹⁶ To that end, as editor, I have put together this brief survey of the subjects (and their interconnectedness)¹⁷ that are touched upon in this book and have compiled a rough and desultory guide to some basic readings. The sample is by no means authoritative, let alone exhaustive, but contains works which my experience in the classroom and discussions with students suggest to be good places from which to start. My two criteria for inclusion are that the books must be readily accessible and must be written in English.

Before one can begin to appreciate the development of the Islamic sciences, and in particular gain a sense of their complementarities during the first three centuries after the *hiǧrah* (the exodus of Muḥammad and the early Muslims from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD), one needs to acquire an idea of the narrative of the emerging development of the responses of the Muslims to the divine fact of the Qur'ānic Revelation—in other words, of the processes whereby the Muslim community of Mecca became the Islamic empire of the 'Abbāsids in Bagdād.

Brief historical surveys are provided in R. McKitterick (ed.) *The Times Medieval World*, London, 2004. See "The Arab Conquests" (by R. McKitterick), pp. 24–27 and "The Abbasid Caliphate and Subsequent Fragmentation" and "Islam and Islamic Culture" (by J. E. Montgomery), pp. 78–85. More substantial histories are found in Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, London, 2002 (edited by Malise Ruthven) and Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge, 2002 (second edition).

The standard narrative political history for the period covered by this book is Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*, London and New York, 1986 (reprinted in 2004). Individual periods are covered in Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, London and New York, 2001; Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad. A Study of the Early Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1997; G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661–750*, London, 2000; and Hugh Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs. The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty*, London, 2004b.

A good all-round introduction to the Islamic world (premodern and modern) is F. Robinson (ed.) *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World*, Cambridge, 1996. G. Endress's *An Introduction to Islam*, translated by

C. Hillenbrand, Edinburgh, 1994, is an excellent handbook full of accurate and concise information, while Malise Ruthven's *Islam. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2000 is just that and has much to commend it. Equally rewarding are David Waines', *Islam*, Cambridge, 2003 (second edition) and Jonathan Berkey's, *The Formation of Islam. Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800*, Cambridge, 2003. Many of the positions taken by Ignaz Goldziher, which have stamped their imprint on so much of the modern Western study of premodern Islam, are readily accessible in his lecture course *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, translated by Andras and Ruth Hamori, Princeton, New Jersey, 1981. A more advanced, but essential, reading for a proper appreciation of the background to many of the viewpoints discussed or modified in GS's work is Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, translated by C. M. Barber and S. M. Stern, edited by S. M. Stern, London, 1971, in two volumes. It is presently out of print.

Central to the issue of the oral and the written, as of virtually every aspect of Muslim life and the study of its premodern articulations is the figure of Muḥammad, the Prophet of Islam and the Messenger of Allāh, and the divine status of Islam's Holy Scripture, the Qur'ān. Of the abundant material on both subjects, the following are useful places to start: Michael Cook, *Muḥammad*, Oxford, 1983 (a concise introduction to both the Prophet and the heavily contested study of his life, written with the author's customary trenchant wit and intellectual independence); Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed*, translated from the French (1961; revised edition 1968) by Anne Carter and first published in English in 1971 (this is an excellent sociological account written by an eminent (former) Marxist); and Martin Lings, *Muḥammad. His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, Cambridge, 2004, a traditional history based on Muslim sources. Lings' book was first published in 1983. F. E. Peters, *Muḥammad and the Origins of Islam*, Albany, New York, 1994, is, in the author's words, a "quest for the historical Muḥammad." Readers may prefer to turn directly to two examples of Prophetic biographies by Muslim scholars: the first, composed by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq in the first half of the second/eighth century and edited in the third/ninth century by Ibn Hišām during the period covered in this book: *The Life of Muḥammad. A Translation of Ibn Ishāq's Sirat Rasūl Allāh*, translated by A. Guillaume, Karachi, 1967; the second, from the eighth/fourteenth century: Ibn Kaṭīr, *The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad (al-Sirā al-Nabawīya)*, translated by Trevor Le Gassick, Reading, UK, 2000 (in four volumes). A collection of articles, many translated into English for the volume, with an excellent introduction on the methodological problems involved in the study of the life of Muḥammad, is Uri Rubin (ed.) *The Life of Muḥammad*, Aldershot 1998, Volume 4 of the series *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*.

The collected revelations communicated by Allāh through the Angel Ġibrā'īl (Gabriel) to His Messenger Muḥammad are known as the Qur'ān. There are many translations and renderings of the Qur'ān in English. *The Bounteous Koran. A Translation of Meaning and Commentary*, London, 1984, by M. M. Haṭīb, is the version endorsed by al-Azhar University in Cairo and contains both text and translation on facing pages; the recent version by M. A. S. Abdel-Haleem, Oxford

On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence, Oxford and Cambridge, 1996 is a thorough rebuttal from the Muslim perspective, while a recent contribution to the debate is Wael B. Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, Cambridge, 2005. A survey of articles is to be found in Wael B. Hallaq, *The Formation of Islamic Law*, Aldershot, 2004, Volume 27 of the series *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*. The beginnings of Mālikism have been studied by Yasin Dutton in *The Origins of Islamic Law: The Qur'ān, the Muwatta' and Madhnan 'Amal*, Richmond, 1999.

By the first quarter of the fourth/tenth century, *fiqh* was instituted as the formal counterpart of theology, known as the "roots of the religion" (*ʿusūl ad-dīn*) or the *kalām* (lit. speech, or discourse). It was the task of Islamic theology to defend the religion against polemical attack from other religions; originally, Christians, Manicheans, and Zoroastrians proved barbaive opponents, though polemic against the Jews also emerged during the fourth/tenth century. From its very inception, however, such polemic was also an intra-community affair as sectarian movements within Islam itself were put to the test. In order to defend the religion, the basic principles of the religion had to be forged as intellectually credible and theologically robust and at the same time remain true to the Revelation of the Qur'ān. At present, good, accessible books on Islamic theology in English are something of a rarity. Although out of date, W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: An Extended Survey*, Edinburgh, 1985 is competent, though preferable (despite its occasional infelicities of translation and the absence of an editorial hand) is Tilman Nagel, *The History of Islamic Theology: From Muhammad to the Present*, Princeton, New Jersey, 2000 translated from the German original (published in 1984) by Thomas Thornton. An early theological system currently enjoying a revival of interest and relevance in the contemporary Islamic world is Mu'tazilism (see entry "Mu'tazilite" in the Glossary for a brief explanation). This phenomenon forms the subject of Richard C. Martin and Mark R. Woodward (with Dwi S. Atmaja), *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol*, Oxford, 1997. A useful analysis of two tendencies of Islamic theological thought ("rationalism" and "traditionalism") is given by Binyamin Abrahamov in *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism*, Edinburgh, 1998, and a sense of the thrust of some of the issues and debates typical of this intellectual activity can be gained from A. Kevin Reinhart, *Before Revelation: The Boundaries of Muslim Moral Thought*, Albany, New York, 1995. For the period discussed by GS in this book, Michael Cook's *Early Muslim Dogma. A Source-Critical Study*, Cambridge, 1981 is essential and has recently been reprinted (2003) but it will not be easy reading for the neophyte. The adventurous will benefit greatly from reading *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite School*, Durham and London, 1994, the most accessible book by Richard M. Frank, the foremost expert of the classical *kalām* in the English-speaking world. Although al-Ghazālī died in 505/1111, some two centuries after the purview of GS's work, his writings are among the most accessible of any classical Arabo-Islamic intellectual works. Translations of central works will be found in al-Ghazālī's *The Incoherence*

of the Philosophers, translated by Michael E. Marmura, Provo, 1997; *Deliverance from Error: Five Key Texts Including His Spiritual Autobiography, al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*, translated by R. J. McCarthy, Louisville, Kentucky, n.d. (a work which originally appeared in 1980 under the title of *Freedom and Fulfillment*).

Central to both the *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* is a concern for the precise dating of the occasions on which the Revelation was granted to Muhammad and the Muslims (known as *ʿasbāb an-nuzūl*). These inquiries led to the compilation and composition of annalistically and chronologically arranged histories (*tarīḫ*, lit. "fixing a date"), an impulse which was nourished by the demands of the *ḥadīth* as it came to depend upon a precise knowledge of the reliability of the transmitters included in any chain of authority (*isnād*): the transmitters were arranged in a sequence of generations which should lead back (through Successors [known as *tābīʿīn*, lit. "followers"] and Companions [*ṣaḥābah*]) to direct (personal) acquaintance with the Prophet Muhammad.

The crowning achievement of this religiously driven, annalistic approach to the writing of history is *The History of the Prophets and Kings* (*Tarīḫ ar-rusul wa-l-mulūk*) of the jurist and Qur'ān exegete Muhammad ibn Gāʾir at-Tabarī (d. 314/923), which is now available in an English translation in 38 volumes published between 1984 and 1998 (*The History of al-Tabarī*, Albany, New York), achieved by a team of scholars working under the general editorship of Ehsan Yar-Shater. Classical Arabo-Islamic historical thought is explored in Tarif Khalidi's, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, Cambridge, 1994, while Islamic historiographical writings form the subject of Chase Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, Cambridge, 2003.

Philosophy is customarily considered to be outside the purview of the Islamic sciences. There is every sense, however, that in its earliest phases, philosophical speculation was also conducted in response to the twin credal doctrines central to much theological speculation: the absolute unicuity of Allāh (known in Arabic as *tawḥīd*); and the justness of the Creator (known in Arabic as *ʿadl*). A sense of the astonishing sweep of Arabic philosophy (narrowly conceived, in the sense of the Arabo-Islamic interpretations of the Late Antique philosophical heritage) is immediately apparent from even a cursory glance at Franz Rosenthal's *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, translated by Emilie and Jenny Marmorestein, London, 1992, a magisterial survey conducted through translations with comments and introductions. The dynamics of the 200-year-long process of rendering into Arabic that which was Greek, are meticulously dissected with razor-sharp analysis by Dimitri Gutas in his *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture. The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsīd Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th Centuries)*, London and New York, 1998. The intellectual explorations of this phenomenon by Muslim philosophers during the course of about a millennium are now surveyed in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, Cambridge, 2005. Some examples of their works are available in *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, edited by Muhammad Ali Khalidi, Cambridge, 2005.

Finally, reference works. There are four basic works in this category, which require regular consultation. *The Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, edited by Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, London and New York, 1998 (in two volumes), is based on an inclusive definition of "literature" and so encompasses entries on philosophers and grammarians, as well as terminology and so much more. A similar inclusiveness of approach characterizes *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Leiden, 1999 (in progress; 4 of the 5 volumes have appeared to date), where readers of this book will find good treatments of many subjects apposite to GS's concerns. Finally, for those who know some Arabic, the fundamental reference work is the *New Edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, the first volume of which appeared in 1960, and now running to some 11 volumes. Work on this major resource is nearing completion and preparation for a third edition is well underway. Finally, the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, London, Costa Mesa, and New York, 1985, is a massive project of which 11 volumes have appeared to date. Its entries are often more voluminous than those of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, but its idiosyncratic (Persianate) transliteration system will render it difficult for beginners to use.

Our readers will also find much of benefit in the ambitious five-volume project, *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, of which the first three volumes are immediately relevant: *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, edited by A. F. L. Beeston *et al.*, 1983; *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, edited by J. Ashtiany *et al.*, 1990; and *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbasid Period*, edited by M. J. L. Young *et al.*, 1990. Though in so many respects a flawed project, these volumes contain useful articles on the principal domains of Islamic scholarship discussed in this book.

Lastly, a book on one of the 'real' subjects of this study is Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper Before Print. The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World*, New Haven, CT and London, 2001.¹⁸

IV "The Oral and the Written"

In the first chapter of *The Oral and the Written*, originally the second of the articles gathered here to have been published, GS reviews previous, predominantly European (and particularly German),¹⁹ scholarship on the subject of orality and writing within the context of the Islamic sciences of the first three centuries of the development of Islam as a tradition and system of beliefs. These scientific disciplines all share one common feature: their reliance on the *ḥisnā*, the chain of authorities used to specify the personal contact which existed between transmitter and his source.

Writing (or more precisely the fixation of writing in published form) tends, in an age of large-scale publication, to the hegemonic as a practice. Intolerant of other, related practices such as the codification of knowledge in orally transmitted formats, it verges on the exclusive and can entail the obsolescence of oral practices. Furthermore, published writings often assume a mantle of authoritativeness,

tied as they are with notions of property and finality—an author will generally retain copyright of the material thus published and will (usually) aim to have bestowed a final blessing of completion on any work thus released for the public domain. In this sense, authoritativeness, property, and finality act as guarantees of authenticity and originality. The implication of this guarantee is that oral traditions, when viewed from these vantage points of writing, are considered to be unreliable and unfixed, common, indeed communal, property because they are the fruit of collaboration and co-operation, and as such devoid of "originality." In this sense, they represent a challenge to the authenticity conferred by writing because of their tendency to defy historicity, their reluctance to yield themselves to any fixed point in time. Thus they are elusive and threatening—or rather defiant, of writing's hegemony. These tensions are merely augmented by the extra dimension of the *transmission* of knowledge and learning, that is, how societies ensure that the body of ideas, beliefs, and items of information which they hold to be crucial to their sense of self-identity are to be continued and made available to future generations. Or, in other words, how societies endeavor to shape and control their own destinies.

This (modern) intolerance of the written for the oral is further complicated within the Islamic tradition by several factors, and it is these factors which GS sets out to put in context: the existence of large-scale compilations of disparate bodies of material often of, in epistemological terms, equally disparate generic parentage; the role of written and oral sources within the composition of these compilations, sources which they often purport to replicate; the significance of the formal structure of these sources, generally cast within the format of a personal (oral) transmission via a chain of authorities that connect the scholar with an aboriginal (at times utopian) past and which signify his means of access to that past²⁰; the co-existence, from the earliest period of pre-Islamic history, of oral and written structures for the codification of knowledge; and the prolific use of a laconic vocabulary to describe these processes of transmission and codification.

In the deep background loom the figures of the mid-nineteenth century scholar Alois Sprenger (whose distinction between lecture notes, aides-mémoire and published books prove to be so important for GS's analyses)²¹ and the late nineteenth/early twentieth century "father" of Islamic Studies as an academic (namely Western) discipline, the Hungarian Ignaz Goldziher whose seminal surveys of the materials detailing the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (the *ḥadīth*)²² dictated the program for the study of this intellectual, cultural, and religious phenomenon in the Western academy. A prominent role is accorded the papyrological findings of Nabia Abbott and the theories of Fuat Sezgin, whose remarkable and monumental survey of the traditional Islamic disciplines, with their wealth of prosopographical and manuscriptorial material, had appeared in the course of the two decades prior to the publication of the original version of the chapter.²³

Sezgin's work promised much—a way in to the Garden of Eden, by allowing for the wholesale restoration of texts from the earliest strata of intellectual activity within the Islamic sciences, for if these compilations were based on exclusively

written sources, then formally their primordial existence as writing could guarantee their authenticity and banish the cankerous doubt of falsification and inauthenticity which orality seemed to involve by virtue of its fluidity and contingent character. Furthermore, modern philology would thus be in possession of a solid concept of *authorship*, and one which is reassuringly familiar to modern attitudes.

However, studies carried out by other scholars attendant upon Sezgin's declarations tended to suggest precisely the opposite of what he had argued, that is, that his newly discovered works were, in fact, but recensions of earlier texts, and not even especially early recensions at that. And yet against this evidence, there is to be found in the Arabic source texts a plethora of references to the writing down of these dizzyingly diverse recensions by the scholars in question. It is this disparity in the assessment of the evidence which GS surveys in the preamble to the chapter, evidence that, when approached from a polar perspective of exclusivity (orality versus writing), is frustratingly contradictory and tendentious.²⁴

It is worth remarking from the outset that GS sets out to develop a framework which will best account for all the available evidence, a framework which is as faithful as possible to what we know of the indigenous traditions of Islamic learning. In other words, his is as scientific a hypothesis as the evidence will allow—and the hypothesis proposed in Chapters 1 and 2 is put to the test in Chapters 3, 5, and 6. It has yet, in my estimation, to be shown not to be the hypothesis which best accounts for all the available evidence. And of course it has implications for the vexed and controversial issue of authenticity but it is to GS's credit that in these preliminary chapters he refuses to slip from hypothesis to theorizing.²⁵

For GS, central to the whole debate are the characteristics of classical Islamic pedagogical methods of scientific instruction. He establishes three teaching methods: the *samāʿ* ("audition"), the *qirʾān* ("recitation"), and the *wiḡāḍah* or *kiṭābah* (written "copying" of material). In Section I of Chapter 1, the relevance of this pedagogical practice for an informed appreciation of the development of the *ḥadīth* is addressed as a preliminary foray, and divergence in traditions and recensions is accounted for in terms of variation in presentation, recording, and transmission. In Section II of Chapter 1, the concept of a "definite, fixed shape" given to written materials which belonged to the lecture tradition is explored, with the important conclusion that in the process of transmission even seemingly "finalized" works could undergo some degree of alteration.

If works thus released did not retain a shape bestowed upon them by those who composed or compiled them, how can we meaningfully apply the label "author" to them? This problem dominates Section III of Chapter 1, where GS muddles the distinction between author and transmitter as fruitful descriptors of the participants in the establishment of any work thus compiled, offering instead a series of distinctions concerning narrator, author, first editor, and second editor, in order the better to capture the "processes of redaction, modification and revision." It is at the end of this section that GS emphasizes one of the foundational notions which gave meaning to these procedures, the desire on the part of the Islamic scholars to ensure the authentication of material rather than to assert originality and ownership.

The copying (*wiḡāḍah* or *kiṭābah*) of such "books" (in the loosest sense of the term) were of comparatively minor importance for the large-scale *ʿisnād*-based compilations which form GS's primary focus. Section IV of Chapter 1 addresses the nature of the sources on which these compilations drew, while Section V of Chapter 1 proceeds to banish the hermeneutic worth of lazy formulations such as "written transmission" versus "oral transmission" (one historian has called such formulations "labour-saving devices") and further to elucidate the point made at the conclusion of Section III, that knowledge could only be reliably and authentically disseminated through the lecture system in which oral and written practices complemented each other. Section VI contains three pointers for the directions which GS's subsequent investigations will take: parallels from the Jewish tradition (see Chapter 5); the transmission of pre- and early-Islamic poetry (see Chapters 3 and 4); and the continuation in the Islamic period of late antique pedagogical practices (see Chapter 2). The focus of Chapter 1, then, is those Islamic scientific methodologies which largely depended upon the *ʿisnād* as their principal mechanism for the provision of information.

In Chapter 2, originally published 4 years (1989) after the article on which Chapter 1 is based (1985) and thus the third article of this collection to be published, GS extends the compass of his inquiry to include those disciplines which did not depend upon the *ʿisnād* as their principal mechanism for the provision of information. Once again, the burden of inquiry is the exact transmission procedures demanded by the three disciplines in question: grammar, lexicography, and medical and philosophical instruction. These epistemologies are from an early time onwards marked by the production of "properly edited books (in the strict sense)" and commentaries composed for the elucidation of these books (p. 46).

After a brief summary of the findings of Chapter 1, the chapter is divided into three sections: Section I is devoted to the Late Antique Hellenistic (particularly Alexandrian) teaching tradition; Section II considers the fields of grammar and lexicography, while medico-philosophical instruction dominates Section III.

In 1930, the eminent scholar of the Graeco-Arabic translation phenomenon (the project to render the bulk of Late Antique Greek heritage into Arabic which was initiated under the aegis of the early 'Abbāsid caliphs and which ran out of steam in the second half of the fourth/tenth century),²⁶ Max Meyerhof published an influential study of the tradition which maintained that philosophical instruction in Bagdād was the direct epigone of the Alexandrian academic curriculum.²⁷ Several studies have contributed to the dissolution of this imagined direct link and to the better understanding of the dynamics of the process, GS's study among them.²⁸ At stake is, as so often in the study of the origins of Islamic cultural, religious, or political institutions, the very question of the "originality" of Arabo-Islamic civilization, though all too often this question is phrased in terms which prejudge the issue and find in favor of the tradition from which the borrowing is made—as if, in other words, we were to deprive Virgil of any creativity because he "based" the *Aeneid* on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer. GS takes great care to point out the differences as well as the similarities in both pedagogical traditions, electing instead

to talk of "structural similarities" rather than "direct dependencies" (p. 48). Thus, we encounter lecture notes (*aides-mémoire*) ascribed to both teacher and student and books circulating under a student's name which are essentially reworked versions of a teacher's works, as well as records of lecture commentaries on fixed texts. We are also encouraged to stress, however, the significance for Islamic practices of their emphasis on "audited transmission," a significant idiom which marks its difference to the Alexandrian tradition, as well as the range of possible zones of influence, both internal and external, to which Islamic teaching methods may have been exposed. He also, however, capitalizes upon the benefits offered by this survey of Alexandrian practices to import a terminological distinction made simply and clearly in Greek which will become fundamental for his analysis of the Arabic textual tradition, namely, that between the *hypomnemata* ("private written records intended as a mnemonic aid for a lecture [or a conversation]") and the *syngrammata* ("literary works composed and redacted according to the canon of stylistic rules") (p. 46).

Section II is dominated by the intriguing observation that within the domain of Arabic grammar written and published books seem to have been produced earlier than within other domains (towards the end of the second/seventh century), prominent among which is the *Kiṭāb* ("The Book") of Sībawayhi (d. c. 180/796).²⁹ Having established the character of Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb* as a book "with a fixed shape," GS proceeds to discuss the transmission of the manuscripts of the work, and notes an important influence thereon from an *ʿisnād*-based method: chains of transmitters (*ṭirwāʾiṭ*) declaring "an uninterrupted sequence" of transmission which thereby link any given owner with the author of a work (p. 50). This influence encompasses Prophetic tradition (*ḥadīṭ*), juridical reasoning (*fiqh*), Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) as well as works of philology and history. Thus, GS can conclude that the technique of *qirāʾah* was the most natural transmission method for books in the strict sense (i.e. *syngrammata*) (p. 50).

The early scriptorial history of Arabic grammar is concluded with a preliminary discussion of the shadowy figure of al-Ḥallī ibn Aḥmad, the teacher of Sībawayhi.³⁰ Chapter 6 of the present book is devoted to a fuller discussion of the role of al-Ḥallī within the textual foundation of Arabic lexicography to which GS devotes the most substantial proportion of Section II.

In many procedural respects, Arabic lexicography enjoyed a close propinquity with the *ḥadīṭ* and was characterized by sessions of "dictations," the written records of which consist of units of information each with their own *ʿisnād* and *maṭn*. Generically then this discipline should be classed among those dominated by *ṣanāʿ*, with the important exception that for lexicographical books in the strict sense, once they became available, "*qirāʾah* was the most suitable form of transmission," usually accompanied by "the explanation of a work by a teacher" (p. 58). This is confirmed by the observation that there are documented instances in which the study of books (in the strict sense) in accordance with the technique of *ṣanāʿ* was reserved as a mark of respect for a scholar's peers or superiors.

The influence of an *ʿisnād* method on the domain of medico-philosophical instruction forms the subject of Section III.³¹ GS concentrates on the practice of Ibn al-Ṭayyib³² and his student Ibn Buṭlān and notes the domination of the method of *qirāʾah* which is significantly affirmed by being recast in the form of an *ʿisnād* of scholars who "read before" their respective teachers in a sequence which spans some one and a half centuries. Furthermore, the influence of such methodology is not confined to the mechanics of transmission and authorization, but also includes an important estimative dimension, in that (according to the seven-point argument elaborated by the Christian Ibn Buṭlān in his attack on his Muslim opponent Ibn Riḍwān)³³ "audited transmission" is declared to be epistemologically more reliable than plain and exclusive book learning. In the process of constructing his argument, Ibn Buṭlān elicits support from the stance of *ḥadīṭ* scholars and philologists who were opposed to an exclusive reliance on written sources. In addition, we are left to ponder the cultural dynamics of a Christian scholar valorizing the techniques of that most Islamic of epistemologies, the science of *ḥadīṭ*, in an attack on a Muslim opponent who is thus found wanting.

In 1992, the article, the fifth of the series, which is here translated as Chapter 3, was published. It is at one and the same time an archaeology of writing and writing practices from the pre-Islamic period to the late-second/eighth century, the period with which GS begins his investigations in Chapters 1 and 2, and a scrutiny of the cultural role which writing played in early Islamic society. Those readers unfamiliar with Islamic Studies as a discourse could best and most profitably approach the subject matter of this book by beginning with Chapter 3. A shortened version of the article appeared in an English translation in the journal *Arabica* 44 (1997), pp. 423-435, with a brief introduction by Prof. Claude Gilliot. Correspondingly, then, it is widely and frequently referred to in Anglo-American scholarship.

GS's archaeological survey covers five principal domains: the use of writing for important documents such as alliances, contracts, and treaties and the fixing of these documents in public places as a testament to what had been agreed; the role of writing in the composition, transmission, and preservation of early Arabic poetry from pre-Islamic times to its codification in anthologies and *ḍiḥwān*s during the late Umayyad and early 'Abbāsid period; the emergence of composed books "with a fixed text" (p. 72); the first collections of the Qur'ān and the origins of Qur'ānic readings which led to the development of the science of Qur'ānic readings; and the legalistic conception of writing as a document which requires corroboration through oral testimonies.

GS plausibly postulates a pre-Islamic existence of the practice of writing for the recording of important decisions and adduces in support of his postulate a range of material, noting the relevance of the recording of the name of the scribe of such documents and the significance of the exhibition in the Ka'bah (which Muslims believe to be the "House" of Allāh at the heart of the Sanctuary of Mecca) of several especially important documents. Official epistles, letters of protection,

and treaties, all issued by the Prophet Muhammad, belong to this category of writings.

The "publication" of such documents differed from that of the principal form of pre- and early-Islamic creative activity, poetry, often referred to as the *ḏiḥn al-ʿarab* (the cultural, historical, and poetic register of the Arabs), for poetry was designed for oral recitation in public performance. The role of the poetry transmitter, known in Arabic as *rāwī*, is crucial for a proper appreciation not only of the conservation of these poems but also, as GS is at pains to make clear, of their possible, and occasional, improvement. At the very heart of the Arabic poetic experience, then, lies a shared activity between the poet, the *ṣāʿir* (the one who "feels" the poetry) and the transmitter, the *rāwī* (the one who "twists" it into shape).

Such an approach is fundamentally alien to standard Western conceptions of either the creative act or the poetic impulse and is downright inimical to obsessions with "textual accuracy and the faithful transmission" (p. 67) of an original, to say nothing of its incompatibility with "the idea of a written redaction." Such a technique is attested well into the third/ninth century (among, for example, the learned transmitters, often referred to in Western works as *rāwīyāt*) and satisfactorily accounts for the plethora of "improvements" which the tradition records for the most ancient of poems.³⁴

And yet, there is another surprise in store for us: the attestations of the use of *written* collections of poems, a feature which GS explains as comparable to the coterminous habit of writing down the *ḥadīṭ* material—both traditions had in common the ever-widening discrepancy between ideal and reality, as poets and scholars resorted more and more to written materials as aides-mémoire, intended to facilitate both lecturing and the public performance of their amassed learning. Parallel to the *ḥadīṭ*, too, is the absence of fixed texts transmitted in a standardized form, though here too, GS, ever sensitive to the cornucopian abundance of variety in the traditions he is studying, suggests that we can see in a couple of caliphal commissions "anticipations" of publication, on the one hand, and continuations of the practice of depositing important writings in holy locations, on the other.

It is worth pausing briefly to reflect on the idea of progress which is celebrated in the custom of relying on "heard," oral transmission for the preservation of bodies of knowledge of particular significance (be it religious, cultural, spiritual, or emotional) to early Islamic societies. As GS indicates, this procedure "was intended to retain flexibility: what was good . . . was to remain open for future improvement." The guarantor of the success of this procedure is the scholar, properly trained in all of the system's complexities.

When Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* was translated into Arabic as part of the project to make Aristotle's *Organon* available to Muslim intellectuals, 'Abbāsīd thinkers would have been exposed to a different conception of scientific discovery and progress, one which proved remarkably fertile in (among others) the domains of philosophy (al-Fārābī [d. 339/950] and Ibn Sīnā [d. 428/1037]) and geography (al-Mas'ūdī [d. 345/956] and Ibn Ḥawqal [d. after 362/973]).³⁵ It was upon this concept of scientific progress that Alexandrian scholars (and following them, their

Syriac Christian epigones) had based an edifice of philosophical and pedagogical pedigree.³⁶

According to this approach, the discovery or invention of any thing (be it, for example, a craft or a discipline: the specific case which Aristotle is discussing is rhetoric) is the hardest step of all; once achieved, however, advancement is both additive and cumulative, occurring steadily and in steps (with each step being easier to take than the originary moment of inception), as the discovery is incrementally improved and brought, through augmentation, to perfection.³⁷

A civilization's ability to accommodate creatively the kind of tension which was thus generated between these two apparently antagonistic visions of progress is a marker of its receptiveness of diversity, of the facility with which it can house competing worldviews. A consummate expression of this capacity for creative combination is the figure of 'Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī (d. 629/1162–1163), whose autobiography is eloquently emblematic of the conceptual elasticity that characterizes so many articulations of classical Islam.³⁸

One cannot emphasize adequately the difference which obtains between a modern concept of historical veridicality (in which the emphasis is placed on responses, of varying degrees of pessimism, to human fallibility and the gulf which separates past and present and which asserts the hegemony of inanimate data, such as numismatical, archeological, or epigraphical and written evidence) and this conception of historical accuracy (i.e. as guaranteed by the reliability of the transmitters), one of a matrix of ideas which included the concept of *ʿiḡmāʿ* (consensus) in Islamic legal thinking and one which is cognate with the theory of *tawātur* (i.e. that repeated transmission of an item of information will eventually lead to an acceptance of that item of information as knowable with certainty)³⁹—in this vision of the past, the Islamic community (the *umma*) is a continuum of believers, in which Muslims in the present are intimately linked with their pious forebears (the *salaf*).⁴⁰

GS's reflections on the "validity of legal documents in legal procedures" (p. 82) and on the "contingent or restricted value" of writing are brilliant explorations of this phenomenon. It is to his great credit that he connects the Islamic articulation with a discussion between Socrates and Phaedrus in Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*. One of the abiding interests in Plato's compositional craft and the intrigue of his philosophy is the paradox that, through the figure of Socrates and the technique of the Socratic inquiry, he sought to demonstrate in writing of the highest philosophical sophistication the insufficiency of writing as a way of doing philosophy, whence the importance of Socrates's paradoxical claim that the sum of his knowledge is that he does not know.⁴¹ These are the ideationally fecund tensions at the heart of writing in Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BC.

The question naturally arises in the course of these deliberations: what was the first "book" composed in Arabic, that is, a work released by its writer with a fixed text and intended for general circulation and not dependent on "audited" transmission (*sanāʿ*)? The Qur'ān springs most readily to mind but the complexities of its "communal" collection and the belief that its "author" is Allāh require separate and

extensive treatment (see Sections IV and V, Chapter 3). The answer, previously addressed in Chapter 2, is the grammatical book (*al-Kiṭāb*) of Shawayhi, the seven introductory chapters of which are traditionally called *ar-Risālah* (*The Epistle*) and which may have originated as an actual epistle (*risālah*). The works surveyed briefly in Section III, theological, bureaucratic, and imperial, share an important generic feature: they are all cases of epistolary composition, that is, are all *risālahs*.

As we will have come to expect from GS's surveys of the complex and kaleidoscopic permutations of the relationship between the oral and the written in early Islam thus far, the Qur'ān, the central document in the Muslim consciousness and in so many respects perdurably emblematic of Islamic civilizations irrespective of their many shifting patterns throughout their long histories, presents an involved and complex series of interactions between book and recitation, between the written and the oral. This revelational multiplicity is encapsulated in the very word *qur'ān*, which means both "recitation" and "lectionary,"⁴² and is epitomized by the fact that according to Muslim tradition the Prophet Muḥammad did not "edit" the complete Qur'ān into any fixed shape before his death, though indigenous Islamic tradition does refer to the practice whereby the Prophet dictated the Revelation to a number of scribes, chief among whom was Zayd b. Jābir (d. c. 45/666), the individual entrusted by the Caliph Umayyad with spear-heading the definitive recension and codification of the Qur'ān by "a group of prominent Qurāshites" (p. 76).⁴³

Between these two events, the dissemination and recitation of the Qur'ān became the preserve of the Qur'ān readers (the *qurrān*). In the aftermath of the creation of the 'Uṡmānic codex, and after a period in which the essentially uniform text (known in Arabic as the *mushaf*) and the orally preserved text vied for supremacy, there occurred a shift in attitude away from *riwāyah bi-l-ma'nā* (paraphrastic transmission in which the sense of the text is what counts) to *riwāyah bi-l-laḡ* (literal transmission in which verbal accuracy is paramount) as the 'Uṡmānic codex emerged victorious.

Out of the diversity of the practice of the Qur'ān reciters there arose in turn the tradition of the seven *qirā'āt*, the canonically sanctioned sets of possible readings of the 'Uṡmānic *mushaf* (codex) of the Qur'ān, each represented by an eponymous scholar. Thereby, the community once again ensured that its central document was representative of its constituents, for of these 7 scholars, 1 came from Mecca, 1 from Medina, 1 from Basrah, 1 from Damascus, and 3 from Kūfah (Section IV). Of course, once canonized, the seven *qirā'āt* themselves occasioned a genre of scientific writing in which the teachings of the seven eponyms were recorded, transmitted, and released by their respective students, a process which evolved in tandem with the development of the *ḥadīṡ* (Section V).

Thus ends that part of the present collection which surveys the phenomenon of the written and the oral, broadly conceived.

Chapter 4 was the first of the collection to have been published, in 1981. In terms of this book, it marks the beginning of a series of three detailed and meticulous studies each of which is devoted to one area of investigation, in this case, "ancient Arabic" poetry. It is also at the same time a review article of a book by

Michael Zwettler which appeared in 1978, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implications*. Despite the technicalities of some of the analyses, it has much to offer the reader, especially in terms of GS's shrewd and perceptive comments on the character and nature of ancient Arabic poetry, by which is meant the poetic production of both the pre-Islamic and the early Islamic periods.

The brief scholarly life of Milman Parry (who died at the age of 33 on December 3, 1936) produced a series of publications dedicated to explicating the nature of the tradition in which the ancient Greek ("Homeric") epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were produced through paying close attention to the style employed in the composition of these works. The burden of his work, continued by his students, most notably Albert Bates Lord, is that the style used in these poems is "typical of oral poetry" (Parry, 1971a, p. lxi, n. 1).

It is far from clear whether Parry himself drew from this observation the (indefensible) inference that "Homer was himself an oral poet," in other words whether Parry himself would have taken the step which Lord took, from oral-formulaic style to oral-formulaic composition. Whatever the truth of these matters, for most of the twentieth century this theory of oral-formulaic composition (the Parry/Lord theory or "oral poetry theory," in GS's words) enjoyed an astonishing popularity in Anglo-American scholarship and was applied to a stunning plethora of traditions, modern, and premodern, from Old English to Irish, from Hispanic to Byzantine Greek. It has even encompassed the Bible within its ambit, with studies of, for example, the Gospel of Matthew (Lohr, 1961), though to the best of my knowledge it has not yet been applied to the Qur'ān. Two prominent publications in the 1970s by Monroe (1972) and Zwettler (1978: the book to which this chapter is devoted) in which it was applied to ancient Arabic poetry seemed to herald the discovery of the Holy Grail, or the finding of Hiram's Key to allow us to unlock that most resistant of all forms of premodern Arabic creativity, *ǧāhili* (pre-Islamic) poetry.⁴⁴

It was, however, not to be. And GS shows us precisely why it is not a licit presumption to identify a poem the style of which may bear some resemblances to features generally considered typical of improvised epic poetry (occasional formulae, a scarcity of enjambment, and stereotypical themes) as an oral-formulaic composition (as described by Radloff, Parry and Lord). This distinction between the style of ancient Arabic poetry and oral-formulaic poetry is fundamental and vital, for while there can be no doubt that ancient Arabic poetry was, predominantly though not exclusively, transmitted orally, this is not a sufficient warrant for any inference as to the process of composition which the poem underwent (or subsequent processes of "composition" which it may have undergone in the course of its oral transmission). The fact that many publications devoted to ancient Arabic poetry still perpetuate this confusion is an indication of the hold which the oral-poetry theory continues to exert over modern scholarship in our area.

GS's study also forces us to confront (once more) a radically different notion of creative ownership, for although the poets took great care over their productions, they also returned to them, and revised them, and allowed them to be revised (by their transmitters, *rāwīs*), thus sanctioning the circulation of a multiplicity of

versions of any one poem as effectively the same poem. Perhaps greater precision is required here, for this appears to have been a phenomenon proper to the art form known as the *qasīdah*, usually a polythematic poem, on average of approximately 70–100 verses in length, composed with the same end rhyme and in the same meter: there are 16 canonically “recognized” meters. The *qasīdah* is the most cherished art form in the Arabo-Islamic creative pantheon.

A brief digest of the principal features of the Parry/Lord theory and its indebtedness to the ideas of the nineteenth century Turcologist W. Radloff (pp. 87–88) leads GS to his engagement with Zwettler's work, the main features of which are summarized (pp. 88–90). His disagreements are based on three points: flaws within the theory itself; flaws within Zwettler's “concept of the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* poetry”; and the theory's inability to offer even a satisfactory account of one of its purportedly most indicative features, the abundance of variants in the recorded versions of any given poem (p. 91).

In the first of his disagreements GS relies on the work of others within the tradition of not only Homeric but also medieval German scholarship. This leads him to his first major point; epic poetry, the genre which the Parry/Lord theory set out to explain, is anonymous, whereas ancient Arabic poems are “almost without exception” attributed to a poet. A well-judged comparison with old Icelandic poetry (between epic Eddas which are anonymous and Skalds which are occasional poems) produces the following observation: “a lack of anonymity in one tradition and its occurrence in the other(s) *depends* on the poetic genre involved.” The problem lies with the term “heroic”—ancient Arabic poetry is certainly “heroic” (the poet battles against the desert, against loss, sometimes even against his tribe or his society, and is defiant in his celebration of a powerful sense of self and of commitment to his value system) but it is not “epic” (in any meaningful sense of the term from a literary-historical perspective: the poet's struggle is in a non-technical sense epic, in terms of its scale, for example).

Improvisation figures prominently in the oral-poetry theory, and it is attested as a compositional device within the tradition of ancient Arabic poetry, though here too GS is careful not to allow the slippage in the term to confuse us, for the similarities between oral-poetic improvisation and *ghāfilī* poetry are similarities in name only, with improvised poems in the latter tradition being characterized by their brevity. In fact two ancient Arab poets were renowned for the length of time which they expended on their creations: the “year-long” *qasīdahs*,⁴⁵ and there is good evidence to suggest that the *qasīdah* poems were the products of great artistic solicitude and as such were viewed as “literary property” (p. 97). Accordingly, accusations of plagiarism were not unknown.

Yet how can a poet be accused of plagiarizing the formulae used by another poet, if oral poetry is typified by its utilization of a common pool of formulaic expressions which belong to the tradition and not to any one individual within that tradition? A careful analysis of what Zwettler identifies as a “formula” leads GS to promote the notion that, in the case of repetitions across time, “later poets were familiar with . . . the verse in question and were somehow responding to it” (p. 99)

and to advance, in line with many other scholars, the applicability to the Arabic poetic tradition of the concept of the *topos* as exemplified in the work of Ernst Robert Curtius. The success (and limitations) of the “topical” approach to Arabic poetry are evident in many articles devoted to ‘Abbāsīd poetry.⁴⁶

But what of the profusion of variants which ancient Arabic poetry confronts us with? Does the Parry/Lord theory offer us the only adequate explanation of this profusion? GS turns to twentieth century records of recent poetic practice among the Bedouin for some orientation and suggests that we might profitably begin to approach the phenomena of different versions of an ode or a line or variants within a line as originating either with the poet himself or with the poet's transmitter(s) who were sanctioned by consuetudinal practice to revise and improve the *qasīdahs* they were charged to transmit. To this must be added the “vagaries of the *qasīdah*,” the inevitable “errors in the process of oral transmission,” mistakes on the part of the redactors, forgeries, and editorial improvements. That variations are not a defining feature of the “orality” of ancient Arabic poems is conclusively established by a telling comparison with the poetic production of the early ‘Abbāsīd poet Abū Nuwās (d. c.200/815) which belongs to the written and not the oral tradition. The aptness of the comparison is merely underlined by this poet's renown as a brilliant *improviser* of verse. The chapter concludes with a brief review of one branch of the creative heritage in Arabic which is most definitely amenable to an approach based on the Parry/Lord theory, the folk epic.

In Chapter 4, GS addressed one of the four pillars of the traditional approach to Islamic Studies in the West, ancient Arabic poetry. In Chapters 5 and 6, he applies his theories to two of the remaining three pillars, the *ḥadīṭ* and the indigenous linguistic tradition (*nahw* and *ʿilm al-lughah*): the Qurʾān is discussed only in passing in this book.⁴⁷ It is also important to realize the centrality of the *ḥadīṭ* within the Islamic disciplines, for the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad touch on every aspect of Islamic belief, being, for example, of relevance to the exegesis of the Qurʾān (*tafsīr*) or the articulation of the law (*fiqh*) and theological doctrine (*kalām*). Consequently, whatever view one holds concerning the development of the *ḥadīṭ* will have ramifications for how one views many other features of the premodern Islamic intellectual heritage.

We have had occasion to mention the fundamental incompatibility between a Western conception of verifiable data based upon independent evidence (and thus predicated largely upon “facts”: in the last half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, “facts” were fetishistic icons of verifiability, and the most sublime “facts” were written documents) and that which largely obtained in the Islamic sciences, according to which verifiability was guaranteed by trustworthiness of character (and which thus, according to the Western vision, was suspect precisely because it was not “independent”). This lack of compatibility has manifested itself most acutely in the domain of Western *ḥadīṭ* scholarship, which, until recently, has begun from a default position that any given *ḥadīṭ* is not only unverifiable but is inauthentic or forged, with the burden of proof being on the establishment of its genuineness (though this is largely presumed to be

impossible), whereas Muslim scholars start from the assumption that any given *ḥadīṭ* is verifiable, authentic, and genuine, from which point they proceed to weed out what they consider to be the forgeries. This has certainly been the Islamic approach at least from the time of the great canonical collections in the third/ninth century, but it may conceivably antedate the production of these textual collections by about a century or so (though this statement is far from uncontroversial).

The history of this Western approach has now been written from two contrasting perspectives, from the Muslim viewpoint by Muḥammad Ṣiddīqī (and Abdal Hakim Murad) (1993) and by Harald Motzki (2004) and the interested reader is referred to these works. Central is the figure of Joseph Schacht whose *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* appeared in 1950 (Oxford) and met largely with approbation and acclaim. To begin with, dissentient voices in the West and the Islamic world went largely unnoticed, their formulations either ignored or ostracized to the periphery.

The formulations of Nabia Abbott and Fuat Sezgin did much to redress the balance, though (as we have seen) GS has established beyond a shadow of doubt the untenability of Sezgin's theories and the need to modify Abbott's. Schacht's very idiosyncratic historical theories aside (concerning the irrelevance of legal *ḥadīṭ*, for example, for the early Islamic community), his principal legacy to the study of the *ḥadīṭ* is formal, the identification of a mechanism whereby the common link (CL) in a chain of authorities (*isnād*) is established for a set of variants of any given *ḥadīṭ*.⁴⁸ By the 1980s, this formal mechanism had been further developed by G. J. H. Juybnoll, and it is this revised technique of *ʿisnād* analysis which GS adopts and combines with appraisals of the text of the sayings (i.e. in Muslim terminology the *matn*), with a view not to confirming Schacht's (untenable) theories but rather to attempt to trace the processes whereby the *ḥadīṭ* developed, by concentrating exclusively on one family of contradictory *ḥadīṭs*, those dealing with the very issue of the writing down of the *ḥadīṭ*. The *ḥadīṭs* in favor of written recording had further been adduced by scholars such as Sezgin and Abbott to argue that the *ḥadīṭ* had a long tradition of being committed to writing (and as such fell within the Western purview of empirical verifiability), thereby delimiting any postulated tradition of oral transmission.

GS's first move is to return to an observation made by an earlier scholar, Josef Horowitz, concerning the parallels between the history of the development of oral and written doctrine in Judaism and Islam. The relationship is not one of dependency, with Islam being considered a development of Judaism, but of independent polygenesis, of two traditions in which written records formed a feature of pedagogical practice (*hypomnēmata*). Therefore, what the sources confront us with is a "theoretical" aversion to the commission of the *ḥadīṭ* to writing; this aversion is no less real for being "theoretical." Furthermore, in Iraq there was a widespread aversion to the public consultation by a scholar of his written records for the transmission of the tradition. This geographical approach prioritized "recitation from memory" (p. 115) to a greater extent and for longer than elsewhere in the Islamic world, finally falling into desuetude with the centralization of scholarly

activity in the caliphal capital, Bagdad. Thus, all protestations to the contrary, the "preclassical" *muṣannaf*/works (collections arranged thematically into chapters)" (p. 114) existed in writing about 100 years before the canonical collections of the last third of the third/ninth century.⁴⁹

But whence these protestations, why the aversion, and why the valorization of memory? Veneration of the Qurʾān is the principal explanation adduced, among several others—a reluctance to acknowledge the authority of a written corpus tantamount to the divine Revelation, combined with a desire to reserve for scholars the right to avail themselves of "the opportunity to modify, accommodate and, if necessary, to change, indeed even to abrogate certain rules," in other words, to preserve and maintain a living tradition (p. 120). This preservation of the tradition as *living* led to a consensus which assumed the aura of a taboo, one which not even a large-scale compilation of the *ḥadīṭ* by az-Zuhri at the behest of the Umayyad caliph Hiṣām could check.⁵⁰

Thus, geographical diversity of practice in recording and transmitting the *ḥadīṭ* becomes antagonism between East and West, between Iraq and Syria, and this in turn manifests itself in the emergence of "*ḥadīṭs* against the written recording of traditions," and in an increased emphasis being placed on the vital pertinence of memory. The last section of the main part of the chapter, pp. 127–129, examines the history of the *ḥadīṭs* in favor of the written recording of traditions, which, while its advocates eventually "won the day," was curbed (from any challenge to the textual hegemony of the Qurʾān) by its hierarchical subordination within a pedagogical tradition that valued "audited" transmission and remained deeply suspicious of "transmission by way of mere 'copying' ... *kitāb(ah)*" (p. 129).

This is a difficult chapter, the argumentation is close and careful and it will present severe challenges to those readers not familiar with the finer points of *ḥadīṭ* scholarship, so much in evidence in the diagrams and their commentary (pp. 130–140). We should not lose sight, however, of GS's control of his material and of his refreshing insistence on the historical significance of geographical diversity (identification of the principal geographical centers of learning as represented by the chain of authorities in an *ʿisnād* is a key component of *ḥadīṭ* analysis)—a pertinent reminder that we should not consider the Islamic lands, for all their unity under Islam, to be uniform in the homogeneity of their traditions, practices, values, and aspirations, but should view them rather as microclimates within one prevalent system.⁵¹

The article translated as Chapter 6 originally appeared in 2000, about a decade later than Chapters 2 and 5 and eight years after Chapter 3. In it GS turns to a thorny problem in the early history of Arabic lexicography, one which occasioned significant problems for the classical Islamic scholarly tradition and for its modern descendants, the authorship of the earliest Arabic lexicon, the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* (*The Book of [the Letter]* ʿAyn) attributed to the legendary scholar al-Hallī ibn Ahmad. This chapter is remarkable on three counts: GS's success in clarifying the complex and often contradictory evidence concerning the authorial activities of al-Hallī and his disciple al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaḥḍar; his exposition of the reception

history of the problem among classical Muslim scholars, a survey which reminds us that premodern reception histories can be just as liable to the meanderings and tergiversations of interpretation as their modern counterparts; and his introduction (pp. 151–152) of a third technical term borrowed from Hellenistic Antiquity, after the manner of Werner Jaeger's study of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1912), *gramma* (pl. *grammata*), a "writing of the school for the school."⁵²

If al-Ḥalīl (d. between c. 160/776 and 175/791) is really the author of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, and al-Ḥalīl, as we know, was the teacher of the grammarian Sibawayhi (d. c. 180/796), now generally held to be the author of the first "book," properly speaking, in Arabic (after the Qur'ān, of course), then our ideas concerning the date of the appearance of the first "book" (in fact the first scientific treatise) would require revision by about a quarter of a century or so. The issue, then, is of crucial importance for GS's reconstruction of the history of writing and "publication" in early Islam. We have already been presented with an outline of the differences in practice between lexicography and grammar in Chapter 2, pp. 49–58, where the issue of al-Ḥalīl's authorship of a book on grammar is also discussed.⁵³

The *Kitāb al-ʿayn* is organized in accordance with a set of phonetic criteria based on a classification in terms of where in the human vocal apparatus the sounds of a word's radical letters are generated, beginning with the laryngeals and concluding with the labials.⁵⁴ According to this scheme, the letter *ʿayn*⁵⁵ is the phoneme produced at the deepest point of the larynx and thus is accorded pride of place in the arrangement of the entries. As a lexicographical principle, this approach did not meet with huge success.⁵⁶ The chapter, then, starts with a survey of the reception of al-Ḥalīl's lexicon in modern scholarship and the discordant theories which this work has generated. The issue revolves around the extent of the involvement in the composition of the work of al-Ḥalīl's student al-Layḥ ibn al-Muzaḥfir (d. 200/815–816), a participation about which the introduction to the lexicon is really quite explicit, and which led two earlier scholars (Brünlich and Wild) to credit al-Ḥalīl as the creative genius at work in the devising of the scheme and to identify al-Layḥ as the individual entrusted with realizing his master's theories. This basic position was accepted by Talmon. Yet, it was the Polish Arabist Danecki who noted a discrepancy between al-Ḥalīl and Sibawayhi in their theoretical approaches to phonetics—in other words it is clear that the pupil was unaware of his master's teachings in this regard, despite the plethora of references made by Sibawayhi to al-Ḥalīl's grammatical teachings. Thus, we are left with the curious observation that the more sophisticated phonetic system (al-Ḥalīl's) is purported to be considerably older than Sibawayhi's less developed system. Therefore, according to one prevalent theory of scientific progress (the broadly meliorist adaptation of Aristotle's theory presented in the *Sophistici Elenchi* that increasing complexity, as the product of continued experimentation, is an indication of the advancement of knowledge and as such must be temporally posterior to any evidence of systematic or theoretical simplicity), al-Ḥalīl's complex phonetics must be later than Sibawayhi's simpler model.⁵⁷ In addition to this curiosity, there is the troubling absence of any references to al-Ḥalīl's theories in his capacity as *lexicographer*

(*luḡawī*) as opposed to *grammarian* (*nahwī*) in later works, a claim made even by as-Siḡṣṭānī (d. c. 250/865), later head of the Basran school of linguists; and finally the perplexing detail that the work arrived in Basrah from Ḥurāsān.

Close reading of the terminology used in passages from the lexicon to introduce al-Ḥalīl's own ideas lead GS to the conclusion that he "had begun to write a proper book for *readers*, more particularly for *dictionary users*" (p. 151), a finding which consequently allows us properly to historicize Sibawayhi's otherwise quixotic decision to "publish" his grammar book, the *Kitāb*. Discussion of the transmission of al-Ḥalīl's lexicon shows that it did not take place systematically in debating circles or lecture courses (methods which al-Ḥalīl used for his other teachings on grammar, metrics, and musicology), that this public "parimony" with the lexicon is characteristic of both al-Ḥalīl and al-Layḥ, and that the text of the lexicon was subjected to the customary process of revision at the hands of later scholars.

The chapter concludes with a detailed analysis of the genesis of "the different medieval and modern views on al-Ḥalīl's authorship" (p. 153 ff.) as they struggled to come to terms with the uneven character of the text of the work, their sole access to possible reconstructions of the composition history of the lexicon. Thus, the classical Islamic tradition can itself be the product of a series of responses to textual problems; it does not represent an uncomplicated continuum; strategies of reading were just as liable to change and development as the works to which they were applied; and an individual's (idealized?) fame could also determine the parameters within which that individual's compositions were read by posterity, premodern, and modern.

V Division of labor

For those who like to know such things, we worked according to the following pattern: Uwe Vagelpohl (UV) produced an excellent first translation, which was edited by JEM and then by GS. In consultation with GS, JEM wrote the Introduction and compiled the Glossary and the Index, which UV realized electronically. UV also supervised the electronic preparation of the manuscript. It has been a genuine privilege to work with two scholars who have displayed such unfailing commitment to the project and who have persevered with an editor's whims with commendable tolerance.

I first conceived the idea of producing these translations just over a decade ago but was unsuccessful in finding any monies to make it possible. It has been my great good fortune to be able to acknowledge the support of the Wright Studentship of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Cambridge. The fund exists, among other things, "for the promotion of the study of Arabic in any other way which the Electors may from time to time determine." We are grateful to the Electors for determining to support this volume, which is, we hope, a work fully within the scholarly tradition so ably represented by William Wright.

1

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE
SCIENCES IN EARLY ISLAM

Oral or written?

Hitherto, controversy has surrounded the issue of whether the major compiliary works of the Arabo-Islamic sciences composed between the second/eighth and fourth/tenth centuries, marked by their use of *isnād* (chain of transmitters), depended on mainly written or oral sources. Examples of such compilations are the *Kitāb al-muwāḥḍa* (The Book of the Well-Trodden [Path]) by Ma'lik Ibn Anas (d. 179/796), the *Kitāb al-mağāzī* (The Book of the Campaigns) by Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767), the *Ṣaḥīḥ* (The Sound [Compilation]) of al-Buḥārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875), al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) *Tarīḥ* (History) and *Tafsīr* (Qur'ān Commentary), and Abū 'l-Farāğ al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 356/967) *Kitāb al-ʿağānī* (The Book of Songs).⁵⁸

In her *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*,⁵⁹ Nabia Abbott advocated an early and incremental written tradition, based on a plethora of evidence such as Umayyad papyri fragments. Fuat Sezgin proposed in his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*⁶⁰ a method for the reconstruction of the (as he maintains, exclusively written) sources of these compilations.⁶¹ He further maintained that he had discovered a number of early source texts on which the late compilations were based.⁶² With the work of these two scholars, earlier claims about a largely oral transmission of the Arabo-Islamic sciences up to the time of the major compilations⁶³ seemed to have been laid to rest.

[202] (The numbers in brackets refer to the pagination of the original articles on which the translation is based.) In the meantime, however, several studies testing Sezgin's method and claims have cast doubt on the exclusively written character of these sources. At best, the newly discovered, purported source texts proved to be later arrangements or different, but by no means earlier recensions of those source texts, that is, recensions which were not drawn on in the well-known later compilations (e.g. al-Ṭabarī's *Tarīḥ* [History]). One example is the so-called Qur'ān commentary of Muğāhid (d. 104/722), actually the *Tafsīr Warqāʿ* *ʿan Ibn ʿAbī Nağh* *ʿan Muğāhid* (The Qur'ān Commentary of Warqāʿ on the Authority of Ibn Abī Nağh on the Authority of Muğāhid).⁶⁴ At worst, they turned out to be extracts from later compilations, for example, Abū Miḥnaf's (d. 157/774) presumed *Kitāb al-ğarāt* (The Book of Raids), which is in fact a part of Muḥammad ibn A'ṭam al-Kūfī's (d. after 204/819) *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (The Book of Conquests) in which Ibn A'ṭam exclusively quotes traditions from Abū Miḥnaf.⁶⁵

Moreover, studies of works extant solely in divergent later versions have uncovered a high degree of discrepancy between those different versions. For this reason, literal, and sometimes even complete, quotations of (more or less codified) books, which, according to Sezgin, had already taken place at an early date in the transmission of scientific knowledge,⁶⁶ seem highly unlikely. As a result, Sezgin's optimism in claiming to be able "to reconstruct many old source texts in their entirety from later compilations"⁶⁷ was unjustified. Al-Samuk's study dealing with the different extant recensions of Ibn Ishāq's biography of the Prophet (Ibn Hišām's [d. 218/834] *Sira* [Biography], at-Ṭabarī's Ibn Ishāq-"quotations" [203] etc.) has shown that, due to the innumerable variants found in the different textual traditions, a reconstruction of Ibn Ishāq's material would evince confusing inconsistencies.⁶⁸

Werkmeister's study on the sources of the *Kitāb al-siqd al-farīd* (Book of the Unique Necklace) established that sources demonstrably available to the author in manuscript form had little impact on the work. Alleged borrowings by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940) from actual books which previously had been considered his models and sources (al-Ġāhiz's [d. 255/868-869] *Kitāb al-bayān* [The Book of Eloquence (and Exposition)], Ibn Qutaybah's [d. 276/889] *Kitāb ʿayūn al-aḥbār* [The Book of the Wellsprings of Reports]) for the most part exhibit substantial differences from their supposed counterparts in the aforementioned texts. Only an indirect connection can plausibly be posited.⁶⁹ All this seems to point towards oral transmission. Advocates of written transmission can, however, argue against these two studies as follows: in the case of Ibn Ishāq, credible authority has it that he put his history down in writing,⁷⁰ while for Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, some of his supposed oral sources are texts which had been put into a *fixed written* form by their authors.

Today's uncertainty about the question of oral versus written transmission is fittingly illustrated by M. Fleischhammer's statements on the sources of the *Kitāb al-ʿağānī* (The Book of Songs), a subject which he studied intensively. He maintains on the one hand that "Nowadays, . . . there is widespread agreement that, in most cases, these *ʿisnāds* conceal written sources" while on the other, he states: "Often enough, we cannot disprove beyond doubt the existence of a genuinely oral tradition."⁷¹

[204] In what follows, we will attempt to solve this problem by proposing a theory which can, we believe, reconcile what seems to be diametrically opposed points of view. It should be added that this theory emerged as a result of a careful consideration of the results of previous, established research rather than renewed source studies and that, in the course of our examination, we felt compelled to return to the view of A. Sprenger on a number of essential points. He was the first Orientalist to deal with this question.⁷²

The theory will be formulated in six points. For a better understanding of our argument, it will be helpful to illustrate some of the characteristics of the Islamic practice in the teaching of the sciences. Modern academic lecture courses, the "Vorlesung," shall serve us as a model. The institution of academic lecture

courses, practised in antiquity (some of Aristotle's works were only transmitted through lectures), was familiar to Muslims, too, under the label *ṣamāʿ*, namely, "audition."⁷³ This form of teaching, which involved the students *listening* to a teacher's (*ṣayyih*) or his representative's recitation given on the basis of written notes or from memory, is generally regarded as the superior mode of transmission. Only *qirʾāh*, "recitation", later also known as *ʿarḍ*, "presentation", was considered equal. Like *ṣamāʿ*, it took the form of a lecture, in which the student, in the presence of his teacher, either recited material on a subject from memory or read it out from his written notes. The teacher listened and made corrections. These "lectures" were held in *maǧālis* or *muǧālasāt* (sessions) and *halaqāt* (circles), which in earlier times often took place in mosques, sometimes also in other places, for example, a scholar's home.⁷⁴ Apart from these two methods of transmitting information, simple copying of notebooks (*wiǧādah*, [205] *kitābah*, etc.)⁷⁵ emerged early on. Inasmuch as the text in question was not "heard" from an authority, its transmission was regarded as inferior.⁷⁶

I

On the basis of extensive evidence collected by Abbott and Sezgin, it has become clear that, in the very beginning, writing was used sporadically, and that, over time, its use to record *ḥadīṭ*, legal rulings, historical information, poetry, and so on became more and more widespread.

We should note in particular that this also applies to *ḥadīṭ*. Interestingly, academic discussion about written tradition in the earliest period is less heated than that concerning the phase immediately prior to the composition of the major compilations. On the one hand, Goldzihier explicitly asserts that initially, *ḥadīṭ* was not exclusively intended to be orally transmitted and provides evidence that it had also been put into writing sporadically at a very early stage.⁷⁷ On the other, Abbott⁷⁸ and Sezgin⁷⁹ admit that after this earliest period, there were occasionally religious misgivings against putting *ḥadīṭ* into writing. This very early stage, however, will not be dealt with in the following discussion.⁸⁰

The existence of *ḥadīṭ literature* preceding the canonical *ḥadīṭ* collections is a much more controversial issue: should we, with Goldzihier,⁸¹ date the beginning of the *muṣannaḡāt* (works systematically arranged into thematic chapters) to the time of al-Buḡaṭī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) or place it with Sezgin⁸² a century earlier? Similarly, we could for example inquire after the existence of *fiqh literature* before Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/796) or historical *books* before Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) or even, substantially later, at-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), as well as after the existence of *codified works* of literary history preceding Abū ʿl-Faraǧ (d. 356/967) and so on.⁸³

[206] Against the existence of written *ḥadīṭ* collections prior to al-Buḡaṭī (and of other contemporary works in different fields of learning), scholars have since Goldzihier quoted certain topoi frequently found in the sources such as *mā raʾaynā*

fi yaḍi-hi kitāban qattū ("I [one] never saw a book in his hand") or *lam yakuṇ la-hū kitāb yima-mā kāna yaḥfiẓū* ("he did not have a book, but used to memorise it/keep it in his memory").⁸⁴ These topoi, obviously highly laudatory, have been reported in relation to exponents of several areas of learning, for example, *ḥadīṭ* (Saʿīd ibn Abī ʿArūbah, d. 156/773⁸⁵; Wakīʿ ibn al-Ǧarrāḥ, d. 197/812),⁸⁶ *fiqh* (Sufyān at-Tawrī, d. 161/778)⁸⁷ and philology (Ḥalaf al-Aḥmar, d. c. 180/769⁸⁸; Ḥammād at-Rāwiyah, d. c. 156/773⁸⁹; and Ibn al-Aʿrābī, d. 231/846).⁹⁰

These expressions should not, however, be viewed in isolation from their context: reports about the teaching and learning methods of the respective scholars. Mostly, they indicate that an authority lectured without notes (as Abbott and Sezgin correctly point out).⁹¹ Since the reports explicitly mention it, this was obviously the exception, not the rule. It does not support Goldzihier's interpretation that these scholars shunned "paper and book."⁹²

To substantiate this claim, we will now turn to several reports [207] concerning Wakīʿ ibn al-Ǧarrāḥ,⁹³ who, according to Goldzihier, "shunned paper and book." Our sources identify Wakīʿ as one of those authors who wrote *muṣannaḡāt* (*ḥadīṭ* collections systematically arranged into chapters) long before al-Buḡaṭī. Indeed, we read about him that

no book by Wakīʿ was ever seen and he dictated to them [sc. his students] Sufyān at-Tawrī's *ḥadīṭ* on the authority of the *ṣayyis* [i.e. according to their transmissions] (*mā raʾaynā li-Wakīʿ kitāb qattū wa-amla ʿalay-him Wakīʿ ḥadīṭi Sufyān [at-Tawrī] ʿan aṣ-ṣayyih*).⁹⁴

To conclude that Wakīʿ had no records of Sufyān's *ḥadīṭ* or no written notes whatsoever would, however, be wrong. The same source reports only a little later that Wakīʿ once said: "I never used to write down a *ḥadīṭ* from Sufyān [sc. during his lecture], but committed it to memory. Upon returning home, I wrote it down" and also "I haven't looked in a book for fifteen years, except in a notebook one day."⁹⁵

There is absolutely no contradiction between the custom of writing material down and consulting it when needed on the one hand and the practice of lecturing from memory on the other: Ibn Hibbān al-Buṣfī (d. 354/965)⁹⁶ says about Wakīʿ that

he belonged to those who (for the purpose of seeking knowledge, *talab al-ʿilm*) travelled (*raḥala*), wrote down (*kataba*), collected (*ǧamaʿa*), systematically arranged (*sannaḡa*), committed to memory (*ḥafīẓa*), discussed and reviewed (*ǧakarā*)⁹⁷ and disseminated (*bazza*).

Of course, a *ṣayyih* with a restricted amount of traditions could have worked without written records. It is, however, clearly false to make such claims in regard to scholars who are said to be authors of voluminous *muṣannaḡ* works⁹⁸ or to conclude on the basis of this topos, as Blachère did, that Ḥammād at-Rāwiyah and, as late as the third/ninth century, Ibn al-Aʿrābī did not keep written notes.⁹⁹

It is certainly the case that the records in question were often informal—according to the reports above, Waki's writings possibly took the form of ordered collections of notes [208] or notebooks¹⁰⁰—and that the same material, recited from memory, could assume (sometimes substantially) different forms from one lecture to the next. This is *one* possible reason for the emergence of varying transmissions or recensions (*riwāyāt*) of one and the same work.

Even in the early period, students often wrote down material the teacher read from a notebook or recited from memory. If the *ṣayh* wanted his students to make records, we have to do with the practice of dictation (*ṣināʾ*).¹⁰¹ According to these sources, dictation courses were held by the traditionists Šuʿbah ibn al-Haḡgāḡ (d. 160/776)¹⁰² and Waki ibn al-Ḡarrāh (d. 197/812),¹⁰³ the traditionist and legal scholar [209] Suʿfyan al-Tawrī (d. 161/778),¹⁰⁴ the historians aṣ-Ṣaʿbī (d. between 103/721 and 110/728),¹⁰⁵ Muḥammad ibn as-Saʿb al-Kalbī (d. 146/763),¹⁰⁶ and al-Madāʾini (d. 228/843 or some years later),¹⁰⁷ and the philologists Ibn al-Aʿrabi (d. 231/846)¹⁰⁸ and Taʿlab (d. 291/904).¹⁰⁹ In spite of the immediate recording of material recited during a dictation and (theoretically at least) its transmission in the shape given to it by the lecturer, in practice variations occurred between different students' versions.

Besides dictations, lectures intended "only" to be listened to were another regular feature of teaching practice in early Islam. Even in these "pure" *ṣamāʿ* presentations, some students occasionally took notes. This was tolerated by some teachers, frowned on by others.¹¹⁰ Therefore, it was not strictly necessary to have written records in order to transmit material. According to traditionist literature, students in this situation used to concentrate fully in the presence of the teacher on memorizing the subject matter taught during lectures. Afterwards, they quizzed each other about the lecture's contents and finally recorded it at home for future reference.¹¹¹ Our sources explicitly report, however, that this was not always the case. Concerning the lectures of the early Qurʾān commentator Muḡāhid (d. 104/722), we learn that only one of his students, al-Qāsim ibn Abī Bazzāh, produced a written version. Muḡāhid himself never edited his lectures in book format. However, al-Qāsim's records must have been accessible; all of the transmitters of Muḡāhid's exegetical material, irrespective of whether they heard it from their teacher or not, are said to have copied al-Qāsim's book in the production of their own written versions without, incidentally, ever mentioning al-Qāsim's name in the respective *ṣināds*.¹¹²

[210] To make use of their authorization to transmit a given work they had "heard" through *ṣamāʿ* or *qirāʾah*, scholars in all probability resorted to written records. If they did not have their own notes, they tried to get access to other students' material. The colophon of the sixth/twelfth century unique manuscript of the *Tafsīr Warqāʾ* 'an Ibn ʿAbī Naḡhī 'an Muḡāhid (*The Qurʾān Commentary of Warqāʾ on the authority of Ibn Abī Naḡhī on the authority of Muḡāhid*), studied closely by Stauch (1969), provides the following information: the copyist of the manuscript, who had heard the commentary directly from his two teachers (both of whom were authorized transmitters), used as his exemplar ("Vorlage") the copy

of another member of the circle to produce his own written version quite some time after the lecture had taken place.¹¹³

Under such circumstances, in which (contrary to the dictations) orally presented material was put into writing on the basis of written notes by different people only after some time had elapsed, the emergence of a wide range of variants between the different versions of a given text is not surprising.

In sum, the occurrence of diverging traditions or recensions could have been caused by the following:

- 1 variations in a *ṣayh*'s presentation of material;
- 2 variations in its recording;¹¹⁴
- 3 transmission by his students.¹¹⁴

II

Our discussion so far has shown that early Muslim scholars, perhaps even as late as the second/eighth and the third/ninth centuries, often did not give their work a definite, fixed shape. It should be stressed, however, that this is not tantamount to claiming that they or their students did not have written records for use as lecture notes or mnemonic aids. In addition, it does not exclude the possibility that one *ṣayh* or another prepared thoroughly revised scripts of his lectures. Yet, it does mean that scholars often did not leave behind or edit books in the sense of final, revised redactions of their material. They presented it in each of their lectures (*ṣamāʿ*) in a more or less different version. When transmitting by way of *qirāʾah*, they often authenticated quite different redactions of their work.

Of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/796), we hear that he preferred to have his *Kiṭāb al-muwattaʾ* (*The Book of the Well-Trodden [Path]*) read to him by his students (i.e. he transmitted via *qirāʾah*).¹¹⁵ Sometimes, he recited it himself (i.e. he [211] transmitted by *ṣamāʿ*).¹¹⁶ Occasionally, he is even reported to have issued a copy revised by himself for transmission (this is the technique of *munāwalah*).¹¹⁷ This means that he undoubtedly produced written versions or had them written out by scribes. Nevertheless, he did not give the *Muwattaʾ* a final shape; he did not establish a "canonical" version on which the various recensions which have reached us could have been based. In fact, they document various lecture courses by *ṣamāʿ* or *qirāʾah* held over different periods of time and show a high degree of variation.¹¹⁸

By illustrating this practice with the model of modern university lectures we outlined at the beginning, we can now establish the following: medieval practice as outlined above is similar to a lecture course conducted by an academic on several different occasions and in different forms. Variations can be caused by frequent departures from the script or by successive revisions. Even if such a lecture course is often available in a revised, written form that a teacher might copy and distribute to students (e.g. as a lecture script), he often does not edit and publish his records as a book. Students, however, could edit it after the teacher's death; Hegel's and

de Saussure's lectures spring to mind. Should such a scholar hand out lecture scripts or should revised lecture records be found later among his papers, students would most likely base their edition on this material. If not, they would have to resort to their own records.

Even at an early stage, though, there are documented instances of scholars giving their work—or a version of it—a fixed form. These scholars, in short, produced an actual book. The best known case is that of Ibn Ishāq, who, at the behest of the caliph al-Mansūr, apparently put down his entire historical material in a book [121] entitled *al-Kiṭāb al-kabīr* (*The Great Book*).¹¹⁹ Before and after this written edition, no longer extant, Ibn Ishāq transmitted his material (or parts of it) in lectures.¹²⁰ A report about one of his students, Salamah Ibn al-Faḍl (d. 191/806), tells us that he inherited his teacher's written records (*qarā'īs*, i.e. papyri or parchments) and used them for transmission (for that reason, some scholars preferred his Ibn Ishāq-transmission).¹²¹ The remaining transmitters must therefore have made their own records of his lectures or acquired his material in some other way, for example, by copying from others. Thus, the existence of divergent recensions of Ibn Ishāq's *Kiṭāb al-maǧāzī* (*The Book of the Campaigns*) does not come as a surprise, even though the author himself had given his material a fixed shape.

We cite another example from the discipline of philology. According to a report quoted *inter alia* in Ibn Nāḍīm's *Fihrist* (*The Index or Catalogue*),¹²² al-Mufaḍḍal ad-Dabbi (d. 164/780) "produced" (*amila*, here probably: recorded in writing) his eponymous anthology *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt* for the caliph al-Mansūr (as Ibn Ishāq had done with his historical material) or his son al-Maḍī. As Ibn an-Nadīm himself pointed out, the work's recensions differ substantially in length and arrangement of the poems. These variations can only have arisen from different presentations of the material in al-Mufaḍḍal's lectures and divergences in his students' transmission of it. Ibn an-Nadīm seems to prefer the latter explanation, for he designates Ibn al-A'raḍī's version as the correct transmission.

Coming back to our model once again, we can establish the following: in the cases quoted above, we have academic teachers publishing their lecture notebook as a book (for example, Goldziher's *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Heidelberg, 1910 [= *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1981]). This does not prevent the teacher from using his material (in a different and modified form) in subsequent lecture courses.

[123] The third/ninth century saw a rise in the number of works in the Arabo-Islamic sciences which were given a fixed (book) form (the existence of a dedication or preface¹²³ may be an identifying mark for such works). Authors were possibly influenced by the practice of the *kutāb* ("scribes" or "state secretaries"), who themselves wrote books.¹²⁴

While Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224/838) did not compose the first collection of Arabic proverbs (he did not even write the oldest extant *Kiṭāb al-amāl*, *The Book of Proverbs*), he nevertheless was the first to give such a collection a fixed form. Subsequently, the book could therefore be transmitted not only orally in lecture circles, but also outside these circles in manuscript form.¹²⁵

Arabic biographies and bibliographies rarely differentiated between the two procedures—the production of lecture notes and scripts on the one hand and the writing of actual books on the other.¹²⁶ On the "book character" of Abū [124] 'Ubayd's work, which distinguished it from earlier writings in this genre, we have the following comment by Ibn Durustawayhi, a fourth/tenth century philologist:¹²⁷

Among them [sc. Abū 'Ubayd's books] is his book on proverbs. He was preceded in this by the Basrians and Kūfāns: al-Asma'ī, Abū Zayd, Abū 'Ubaydah, an-Nadr ibn Šumayl, al-Mufaḍḍal ad-Dabbī and Ibn al-A'raḍī. He, however, brought together their traditions in his book, divided it into chapters (*ḥawwaba-hū 'abwāḍan*) and arranged it in the best order (*'ahṣana tarīfā-hū*).

Thematically, the works of al-Ġāhiz (d. 255/868–869) and Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889) belong at least in part to the Arabo-Islamic scientific tradition. Both are authors of actual books, which in the case of al-Ġāhiz often took the form of epistles, and both were connected with the *kutāb*: the former had, at the beginning of his career, "published"¹²⁸ under the name of the *kātib* Sahl ibn Hārūn (d. 215/830), while the latter had written for the *kutāb*,¹²⁹ for example, his *Kiṭāb 'adab al-kātib* (*Book of the Education of the Secretary*).

Contrary to al-Ġāhiz, a "book-writing" scholar, his contemporary and fellow Basrian al-Maḍā'imī (d. 228/843), [125] a historian and (like al-Ġāhiz) author of *'adab* works [see Glossary], was a member of the group of scholars who did not put their writings into a fixed form and only transmitted them through lectures.

It is precisely this difference which is at the heart of the following remark by the historian al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), who distinguishes between the working methods of the two Basrians as follows:

None of the transmitters (*ruwāt*) nor any of the scholars (*'ahl al-ilm*) is known to have written more books than he [sc. al-Ġāhiz]...; Abū 'I-Ḥasan al-Maḍā'imī was also a prolific writer (*kāna kaṭīr al-kutub*), but he used to pass on what he had heard (*kāna yuḥādith mā samī'a*), whereas the books of al-Ġāhiz [...] remove the rust from the mind and bring clear proofs to light, because he has composed them in the best order (*naẓama-hū 'ahṣana naẓm*).¹³⁰

As we have noted above, even works from the second/eighth and the third/ninth centuries, which had been finalized by their authors and some of which are extant in that very version, have been subsequently worked on and transmitted whole or in parts by their authors, their students, or others in lecture courses. In the process of transmission, they have assumed a form different, to a smaller or larger degree, from the version fixed by the author. This process was studied by Werkmeister in his research on the sources of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's *Kiṭāb al-siqd*

al-ḥarīd (*The Book of the Unique Necklace*). Among other material, Ibn 'Abd al-Rabbīn included in his work extracts drawn from two very well-known works: *Kitāb al-amṭāl* (*The Book of Proverbs*) and Abū 'Ubayd's *Kitāb al-amṭāl* (*The Book of Proverbs*). While the *Kitāb al-amṭāl* is freely summarized, the extracts taken from the *Kitāb al-amṭāl* display relatively little variation when compared to the source (except for a number of variants and additions).¹³¹

III

One of the most remarkable intellectual achievements of F. Sezgin is the development of a method¹³² for distinguishing between two types of scholars involved in the transmission of compilatory works by systematically comparing *isnāds*: *collectors* or *compilers* (called "authors" by Sezgin), who compiled their material from multiple sources (according to Sezgin, the sources were invariably written records) on the one hand and mere *transmitters*, who in their lectures "solely" passed on these compilations, on the other. Sezgin maintains that the last shared name in an *isnād* with identical initial links [216] indicates the compiler of a direct source for the book in question.¹³³

However, to make a clear-cut dichotomy between author and transmitter is, at least in the early period, impracticable: until at least the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, most transmitters added to or subtracted from works they transmitted or modified them in some other way. From the fourth/tenth century, however, more and more "stabilized" [217] works were transmitted in a more or less fixed form.¹³⁴ For example, according to Staath (1969) and Leemhuis (1981),¹³⁵ working independently of one another, it was not only Ibn an-Nağhī (d. 131/748) and Warqā' (d. 160/776) who contributed material from other authorities to the *Tafsīr Warqā' an Ibn 'Abī Nağhī an Muğāhid* (*The Qur'ān Commentary of Warqā' on the authority of Ibn 'Abī Nağhī an Muğāhid*) (the *Qur'ān Muğāhid*) discovered by Sezgin. Ādam ibn Abī Iyās al-'Asqalānī (d. 220/835) in particular, the transmitter directly following Warqā', added so much material from sources other than Muğāhid¹³⁶ that he should be considered the work's "author" (in Sezgin's sense). Even the transmitter directly following Ādam, Ibrāhīm ibn al-Husayn al-Kisā'ī (d. 281/894), added material, if only a little.¹³⁷

Therefore, in terms of its size, the so-called Muğāhid commentary as we know it from the manuscript discovered by Sezgin only reached its final state at around the second half of the third/ninth century. It was then passed on without further additions until the sixth/twelfth century.

Another example from the third/ninth century is the *Kitāb ṣahbā Makkaḥ al-muṣarrfaḥ* (*The Book of the Reports of Mecca the Venerated*), the history and description of Mecca,¹³⁸ whose "author" is, according to Sezgin, Ahmad ibn Muḥammad al-Azraqī (d. 228/837).¹³⁹ However, in agreement with the editor F. Wüstenfeld, we can identify the following persons involved in the process of

compiling and transmitting the work¹⁴⁰:

- 1 the narrator, the aforementioned Ahmad ibn Muḥammad al-Azraqī, from whom most of the book's material stems;
- 2 the author, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Azraqī (d. c.250/865), the narrator's grandson. He owes most of his material to his grandfather, but adds many [218] traditions derived from others and even his own;
- 3 the first editor, Ishāq al-Huṣaynī (d. 308/920). He is both transmitter and (according to Sezgin's model) himself an author, having made substantial additions to the work;
- 4 a second editor, Muḥammad al-Huṣaynī (d. after 350/961). While in general merely acting as a transmitter, he added several marginal glosses which have found their way into the text.

After this, the transmission of the work "stabilized". Who exactly is an author in this instance, who a transmitter? By identifying the narrator (person 1) as the book's author and noting the contributions made by the author (person 2) in passing (the book is said to have been "reworked" ["bearbeiter"] by him),¹⁴¹ Sezgin oversimplifies matters.

The transmission history of this work is particularly instructive, because it illustrates the whole spectrum of processes of redaction, modification, and revision which could possibly occur to books transmitted through the lecture tradition. Equally instructive is the fact that redactional interventions become less and less frequent over time and cease altogether in the second half of the fourth/tenth century. Again, this is not the rule: the additions of the transmitters frequently entered "fixed texts" in later centuries.¹⁴²

[219] In this context, we should recall certain duplicate titles found in the biographical/bibliographical literature, especially in Ibn an-Nadīm's *Fihrist* (*The Index or Catalogue*). It remains to be shown whether the same title ascribed to a younger authority is an independent work or an extended compilation of the older authority's work. In most instances, we find the latter to be the case, that is, the text in question was worked on by two or more generations of scholars.¹⁴³

To quote but one example, the *Kitāb ṭabaqāt aṣ-ṣurā' (al-ghāhiliyyin)* (*The Book of the Classes of [pre-Islamic] Poets*) by Muḥammad Ibn Sallām al-Ġumāhī (d. 231/845 or 232/846) and his nephew Abū Ḥalīfah al-Ġumāhī (d. 305/917)¹⁴⁴ is such a text.¹⁴⁵

Frequently, biographers and bibliographers were unable to distinguish between authors and transmitters. If we bear in mind that the process of dissemination of knowledge in early Islam set greater store on authenticated tradition than on originality (i.e. books as original works of art),¹⁴⁶ this does not come as a surprise.

IV

For authors of compilations such as al-Buḥārī, at-Tabarī, Abū 'l-Farağ al-Isfahānī, and Ibn 'Abd Rabbīn, manuscripts of books by previous authors, which they had

at their disposal and quoted and copied from (transmitting their material by way of *wiḡāḍah*, *kiābah*, etc.), played a relatively minor role in terms of quantity and importance. Much more important and numerous were [220] traditions which the compilers had derived directly from the lectures of their informants, be it through their own or other students' notes or through copying their *ṣayh*'s records or a copy thereof. This has been shown for al-Ṭabarī,¹⁴⁷ Abū Ḵ-Farāḡ,¹⁴⁸ Ibn Abī ḍ-Dunyā (d. 281/894),¹⁴⁹ and Ibn 'Abd Rabbih.¹⁵⁰ These traditions can be recognized by an *isnād* displaying an introductory terminology which indicates "oral" transmission (*ḥadāṭa-nī*, "he told me"; or *ṣahbara-nī*, "he reported"; etc.)

In al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, two basic types of these sources can be distinguished¹⁵¹:

- 1 sources mainly drawing on *one* authority while sometimes including traditions from other authorities;
- 2 compilations assembling throughout traditions from different authorities, placed side by side and on an equal footing.¹⁵²

Werkmeister's study on the sources of the *Kiāb al-ṣiqd al-farīd* (*The Book of the Unique Necklace*) has produced similar results. Here, too, there are two types of sources for the material Ibn 'Abd Rabbih received directly from his teachers' lectures:

- 1 Clusters of linked and thematically related traditions which are predominantly traced back to *one* authority but have been enriched with material from other sources. They could have been either specifically assembled by a teacher for a given course or put together at an earlier stage and taken over by the teacher. In the latter instance, the specific arrangement of the material was frequently not established by the authority the cluster was traced back to but by students or later scholars. Consequently, [221] we but rarely find parallels to these clusters of material in the extant books of the authorities in question. Examples found in the *ṣiqd*: the chapter about bedouin proverbs and sayings, traced back mainly to al-ʿAsma'ī (though there is no book by al-ʿAsma'ī [d. 213/826] on bedouin proverbs); traditions about the fall of the Barmakids, attributed to Sahl ibn Ḥārūn (d. 215/830) via al-Ḡāhiz (though there is no such book by Sahl ibn Ḥārūn).
- 2 Numerous more or less related *single* traditions from different authorities.¹⁵³

The following phenomenon can be better understood as a special case of point (1) in the previous list instead of an independent category:

- 1 Sections or excerpts of thematically relevant works treated (i.e. recited or paraphrased, explained or supplemented with additional sources) in a lecture course devoted to a specific topic. This could equally well apply to parts or excerpts of books which had already been given a fixed shape by their authors. The form which the material took in the process of inclusion in the lecture tradition and in which it finally entered the compilations at our

disposal diverges, more or less, from the form the material originally had (e.g. chapters from al-Mubarrad's *Kiāb al-kāmil* [*The Complete Book*] in Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's *Kiāb al-ṣiqd*).¹⁵⁴

Lastly, Fleisshammer's analysis of the material of Abū Ḵ-Farāḡ's immediate authorities also points to these two types of sources. Material that Abū Ḵ-Farāḡ derived directly from the lectures of his teacher al-Ṭabarī (an "author" according to Sezgin's model) and that is parallel to the passages in al-Ṭabarī's *Tarīḥ* (*History*) dealing with the Prophet's life, is traced back almost exclusively to Ibn Isḥāq's *Kiāb al-maḡāzī* (*The Book of the Campaigns*). They therefore belong to the first type of source. The second type is represented by texts from other informants of Abū Ḵ-Farāḡ (e.g. Ibn al-Marzubān, d. 309/921, author of a work on classes of poets) who quote numerous traditions traced back to a large number of different authorities.¹⁵⁵

At this point, it should be remembered that, according to Sezgin, materials transmitted by a teacher (the immediate informant) of the compiler can only be regarded as the "immediate written source" of a compilation if the name of the immediate informant is the last shared name before an [222] *isnād* branches out, that is, the teacher's material originated from *different* sources (the teacher himself being a "major collector").¹⁵⁶

Nowadays, we know that up to the third/ninth and the fourth/tenth centuries, authors and transmitters are often indistinguishable. During this period, transmitters were very much involved in shaping a text. They supplemented the material, shortened or reworked it and so on. Under these circumstances, we are more inclined to regard such material as was transmitted by a teacher (as the immediate informant) and existed in written form in the teacher's records or at least in student notes as the direct sources of compilers—irrespective of the informant being an "author" (i.e. major collector) or a "mere transmitter" in Sezgin's terms.

In some of the *isnāds* Abū Ḵ-Farāḡ provides for his traditions, he quotes books and, on rare occasions, even titles of books.¹⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, he occasionally credits his immediate informant with being the author of the book in question, even though—in Sezgin's terms—he is a "mere transmitter." Sezgin did not overlook this phenomenon and remarks in a footnote: "It also happens that he [sc. Abū Ḵ-Farāḡ] quotes some books, perhaps on account of their fame [...], as if their respective *rāwīs* were their authors."¹⁵⁸

[223] Often enough, however, it is of course possible and useful to distinguish between major collectors (Sezgin's authors), who compiled their material from multiple sources, and mere transmitters, who mainly (only in a few cases exclusively) relayed the traditions of a predecessor.¹⁵⁹ (The material of these major collectors could be called the "ultimate sources"¹⁶⁰ of the great compilers—but not their immediate written sources!)

The distinction between "major collectors" and "authors" on the one hand and "transmitters" on the other probably did not play a large role for al-Ṭabarī and other writers of compilations, who received their material from their teachers. On

this basis, Bellamy once made the apt observation that Sezgin's method of *ʿisnād* analysis allowed us to be better informed about an author's ultimate sources than the author himself.¹⁶¹

Bellamy moreover established that one theory put forward for the disappearance of the shorter works on which compilations drew, that is, the fact that there was no need for them any more once their content was absorbed into the larger compilations, lacked plausibility. On the contrary, it would have been more likely for the earlier books, which were shorter and cheaper than the voluminous compilations, to remain as popular as they had been previously. Bellamy offered the compilers' preferences as explanation: they wanted to have their material in a sifted and revised form just in the manner they received it in the lecture courses. There, a continuous process of excerpting had already separated the wheat from the chaff. One could imagine that this is an adequate description of what Islamic scholars thought. Travels undertaken in the search of knowledge (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*), however, were probably often and for a long time *necessary* for the acquisition of certain material.¹⁶² Many of the compilers' ultimate "written sources" (according to Sezgin) were only accessible to them through attendance at their teachers' lectures, who had already integrated these sources into their own notebooks and records.

That the newly discovered manuscripts often have the [224] character of lecture notes similar to what we have postulated above as the sources for the compilations is another good indicator for the accuracy of our claim. They are definitely not the kind of source works Sezgin made them out to be.¹⁶³

To the first category of works (those containing traditions from one author with limited additions from other sources) belong texts such as the *Tafsīr Marqʿan Ibn ʿAbī Nāḡihʿan Muḡāhid* (*The Qurʾān commentary of Marqʿa on the authority of Ibn Abī Nāḡih on the authority of Muḡāhid*)¹⁶⁴ and the so-called *Tafsīr az-Zuhri* (*The Qurʾān Commentary of az-Zuhri*).¹⁶⁵ The *Tafsīr Sufyān at-Tawrī* (*The Qurʾān Commentary of Sufyān at-Tawrī*) on the other hand falls under the second category (containing traditions from different but equally ranked authorities).¹⁶⁶

V

To sum up the principal characteristics of Islamic teaching practice in regard to oral and written transmission of knowledge, we can make the following points: a teacher presented his material in a lecture (*ṣunṭ*) (frequently) on the basis of written notes or (less frequently) from memory. Even in the latter case, he normally possessed written records of the material. In different lectures on a shared subject, the material was often presented in different ways, and these performances in turn could give rise to different recensions (transmissions). Students either took notes during the lecture or, if they in turn wanted to transmit further the material received in a lecture, afterwards produced a written version from memory or from somebody else's records. Versions thus created could be very different from each other, providing us with another explanation for variant recensions of extant works.

On closer inspection, it seems as if oral and written transmission, instead of being mutually exclusive, supplemented each other. Thus, the question of *either* an oral *or* a written transmission of knowledge in early Islam can easily result in a dispute about definitions. What we do *not* have is an oral tradition in the sense of illiterate rhapsodes passing on their epics and songs (*oral poetry* springs to mind). Equally, written tradition for the most part should not be misunderstood as the verbatim copying and production of editorially finished books.

[225] It might be best entirely to avoid catchphrases such as "written transmission" versus "oral transmission" and to talk about lecture and teaching practices in early Islam.

Keeping this in mind, we need not (like the advocates of a written transmission) seek to account for an *ʿisnād* terminology which allegedly "feigns" orality,¹⁶⁷ (with phrases such as "A reported/told me") while maintaining that the sources were actually written. And there is no need to wonder why *ʿisnāds* almost never or only in exceptional cases list titles of books.

On the other hand, we need not (like the proponents of oral transmission) go out of our way to reinterpret the frequent references to *kutub*, *ḍafāʾir*, *ṣuḥuf*, or *qurʾānīs* written or used by scholars¹⁶⁸ and thus have recourse to often extremely [226] exaggerated reports about their phenomenal mnemonic powers.¹⁶⁹

Incidentally, we never find the terms *ṣifāḥan/ar-rivāyah aṣ-ṣafāḥiyah* or *kitābatan/ar-rivāyah al-kitābiyah* in classical Arabic literature to characterize the mode of transmission in the sciences: they would be the exact equivalents of oral and written transmission. What we *do* find in the texts, however, is *ar-rivāyah al-masniʿah*, "*heard/audited/oral tradition*," inaccurately translated as "oral tradition" (examples on pages 42 and 60). The phrase contains an important distinction: it emphasizes the fact that a student has *heard* the material (rather than merely copied it). Whether the teacher lectured from written records or memory or whether the student wrote down his notes simultaneously or committed the material to memory first is an issue of much less importance which, at the very least, is not expressed in the terminology.

Eschewing the terms "oral" and "written transmission" in this context helps us to avoid another pitfall—the connection of modes of transmission with the (entirely unrelated) question of authenticity.¹⁷⁰ Obviously, it is as easy to falsify material in writing as it is in oral transmission!¹⁷¹

To counterbalance the tendency of some modern scholars to link written transmission and authenticity (and to regard traditions which, according to the compilers, reached them in written form, that is, [227] through *wiḡāḍah*, *kitābah*, etc.,¹⁷² as authentic), we again have to refer to the views of medieval Islamic scholars: they rated exclusively written transmission as particularly dubious and only accepted "heard" material as worthwhile. (This is similar to the precepts of Islamic legal scholars concerning written documents in a law suit: they can only be accepted as valid evidence after their content has been confirmed orally by reliable witnesses.) That their mistrust of written sources was not solely motivated by ideological considerations but by a real fear—of being caught out by scribal

mistakes, of erroneous interpretations, and of relying on fabricated material—is borne out by our sources, which frequently remark on the subject.

In his *Kitāb al-šīr wa-š-šurāḥ* (*The Book of Poetry and Poets*),¹⁷³ Ibn Qutaybah maintains that *ṣamāʿ* is important for every science but indispensable for the sciences of religion and poetry; without hearing it (*ʿidāʾ ʿanta lam tasmāʿ-ḥu*), one cannot distinguish between *sāba* and *šāya* in a poem. Ibn Qutaybah subsequently lists more examples to show that “those who only take their knowledge from notebooks” (*al-šāḥiḥū ʿan ad-dafāʾir*) make mistakes because they are ignorant of the “heard transmission/reading” (*ar-rivāyah al-masmūʿah*). In view of [228] the character of the Arabic script, which was often used without diacritics at that time, this is a powerful argument.¹⁷⁴

With its “lecture system,” *ṣamāʿ* or *qirāʾah*, in which oral and written transmission of knowledge complement each other, medieval Islam created an institution which was, in the eyes of contemporary scholars, capable of reliably and authentically disseminating knowledge.

VI

Finally, we need to make a few remarks on the genesis of this peculiar Islamic institution of tradition. We have to consider the following points of departure:

- 1 The system of authentication practised in Jewish circles in the Talmudic era that according to Horowitz (1918) [= (2004)] had an influence on the Islamic *ḥisnād*.
- 2 The transmission of pre- and early-Islamic poetry also called *riwāyah*.¹⁷⁵ Poetry was regarded as “the science of the Arabs” (*ʿilm al-ʿarab*)¹⁷⁶ and transmitted in a very specific manner: the poet had one or more transmitters (*rāwīs*) who committed his poems to memory. Possibly already at an early stage, they sometimes produced written records as mnemonic aids.¹⁷⁷ Thus, they acquired authentic versions of the texts and disseminated them. Until the early years of the ‘Abbāsid era, such *rāwīs* often treated their texts in a decidedly high-handed manner; some poets (e.g. ʿĠarīr and al-Farazdaq)¹⁷⁸ even expected their *rāwīs* to check their poems and correct minor mistakes.¹⁷⁹ The resultant transmission procedure is so similar to later (admittedly much more developed) methods of transmission used in the Islamic sciences that we can confidently assume the former to have influenced the latter.¹⁷⁹
- 3 [229] The late antique school tradition. In his *Risālah* (epistle) on the Syriac and Greek translations of Galen’s works, the Christian Arab master translator Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 260/873) provides the following information about medical teaching practices in Alexandria:

Students used to meet each day for a recitation (*qirāʾah*) and interpretation of one of his [sc. Galen’s] main works—just as our Christian friends do nowadays, who each day meet in their places of teaching

(which are called *ḥukūl, schoolē*) to study one of the main works of the ancients or one of the other (main) books.¹⁸⁰

It would be difficult to deny the obvious link between late antique teaching practices and their continuation in the Islamic era in Christian Arab circles on the one hand¹⁸¹ and the transmission of sciences in Islam on the other.

Addenda

P. 28

To this day, F. Sezgin has not responded to the numerous critical comments made about his theories.

On this and the following chapter, see now my own *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l’islam*.¹⁸² The most important new finding which modifies or corrects some of the claims I have made in this and the following chapter is the following: around the middle of the second/eighth century, a genre of works emerged which were structured and arranged into chapters (*muṣannafāt*). They were, however, still mainly destined for oral lecturing. Thus, these works belong to an intermediate type between *synggrammata* and *hypomēmata*. To this group belong, among others, Mālik ibn Anas’s *Muwattaʿ* and many of the sources used in the major compilatory works of al-Ṭabarānī and Abū ʿI-Farağ (as opposed to Šhawayḥi’s *Kitāb* which already belongs to the *synggramma* type).¹⁸³ S. Günther¹⁸⁴ has done important research on this type of work.

P. 30

The source works used in the compilations by al-Buḥārī and Muslim, al-Ṭabarānī and Abū ʿI-Farağ were, as we now know, for the most part “literature of the school for the school destined for oral lectures” (cf. previous paragraph).

P. 31

Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965)¹⁸⁵ reports another revealing piece of information about Wākī: “We never saw a book in Wākī’s hand, because he used to recite his ‘books’ from memory (*ḥāna yaqrʾu kutuba-hū min ḥifẓi-hū*).”

P. 35

The entire oeuvre of al-Madāʾinī also belongs to the genre of “literature of the school for the school destined for oral lectures,” whereas the works of al-Ḡāhiz are “proper books.” We have one extant and published example for the former type of text by al-Madāʾinī’s student and transmitter ʿUmar ibn Šabbah: the *Tarīḥ al-Maʾfūḥ al-munawwarah* (*The History of Medina the Resplendent*). It was taken down by one of the students of Ibn Šabbah.¹⁸⁶

On the character and transmission of the texts and works traced back to the *alḥabārī* (transmitter of reports/author of historical works) al-Ḥayṭam ibn ʿAdī (d. 207/822) cf. now the important book by St. Leder: *Das Korpus al-Ḥaiṭam ibn ʿAdī* (see Bibliography).

Pp. 36–37

A recent critical discussion of Sezgin's method can be found in E. Landau-Tasseron's *On the Reconstruction of Lost Sources*.¹⁸⁷

P. 37

On the issue of authorship of scientific and literary works in early Islam, cf. H. Motzki's "The Author and his Work in the Islamic Literature of the First Centuries: The case of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Musannaf*." ¹⁸⁸ Motzki also scrutinizes the ideas of N. Calder¹⁸⁹ who dated a number of legal works that were thought to have been compiled by scholars living in the second/eighth century [e.g. 'Abd ar-Razzāq's *Musannaf* and Malik ibn Anas's *Muwatta'*] to a much later time. ¹⁹⁰

Based on the results of the present articles and his own study of early texts, Motzki was able to show "that 'Abd ar-Razzāq is the author of the *Musannaf*, in the sense that he was the teacher of almost all the material contained in it."¹⁹¹

Pp. 37–38

Compare my remarks concerning p. 30.

P. 181, n. 168

On this report, see the comprehensive discussion in Chapter 3, pp. 80–82.

P. 42, 2nd para.

See also al-Azharī's description of a *ṣūḥufī* in Chapter 2, p. 60.

P. 42, VI

Compare Schoeler (2002b, p. 127 ff.) and later, Chapter 2, pp. 46–49.

Pp. 42–43

The claim of "heard/audited transmission" (*ar-rīwāyah al-masmū'ah*) was in principle still in force even in the age of the *madrāsah*, irrespective of the fact that in most cases, transmission took place on the basis of books. "Heard transmission" continued to play a practical role and, beginning with the fourth/tenth and the fifth/eleventh centuries, assumed new forms: a book heard from or read to an authority was tagged with a written "endorsement," the *ṭiğāzāt as-samā'*. Arab scholars always regarded and still regard manuscripts with such a *ṣamā'* "endorsement" as superior to those without it.¹⁹²

2

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE SCIENCES IN EARLY ISLAM REVISITED

The point of departure for Chapter 1 of this work¹⁹³ was the following question: were the sources of the major compilatory works of the Arabo-Islamic sciences composed between the second/eighth and the fourth/tenth centuries, marked by their use of *ṭisnād*, mainly *written* or *oral*?

The solution we have proposed on this extremely controversial issue can be summed up in a few sentences. The sources for the compilations in question (e.g. Mālik ibn Anas's *Muwatta'* [*The Well-Trodden (Path)*], the *History* and *Qur'ān commentary* of al-Tabarī, or Abū 'l-Farağ al-Isfahānī's *Kitāb al-ağānī* [*The Book of Songs*]) are for the most part *lectures* held by *ṣayḥs* (teachers) on the basis of written notes—read out or recited from memory—which were listened to and put back into writing by students.¹⁹⁴ Thus, these notes are mostly not written works in the sense of books given their finished shape and edited by their authors¹⁹⁵; on the other hand, they are in the majority of cases [39] not purely oral traditions in the sense that the *ṣayḥ* and his audience kept the material under instruction exclusively in their memories.

The formation of different and divergent transmissions of a work can be caused by the following factors:

- 1 a *ṣayḥ* may have presented his material differently in different lectures;
- 2 students would have produced different written records;
- 3 students and their students in turn transmitted the material differently. Besides alterations in a text's original wording, deletions, additions, tendentious revisions, and even tampering and outright forgeries could occur in this process.¹⁹⁶

[40] Arabic scholars held the view that a student should have "heard" the material being taught: *ar-rīwāyah al-masmū'ah*, the "heard" or "audited" transmission (for the most part inaccurately translated as *oral* transmission) was regarded by Muslims as the best method of transmission.

In this chapter, we will extend our study and apply our approach to sciences which did not use the *ṭisnād* in the same manner as the science of *ḥadīṭ* or which dispensed with it altogether. In this context, we will focus on the transmission

of properly edited books (in the strict sense) and that of commentaries on these books, whose text was "audited" (i.e. here, read out).

In the first section, we will point out several characteristics common to both the late antique school establishment and the Islamic system of transmission. The second section will deal with the transmission of knowledge in Arabic grammar and lexicography. In the final section, we will attempt to gauge the impact of Arabo-Islamic transmission methods on later medical and philosophical instruction in Islam.

I

Classical philologists have often had to work with texts which, they discovered, only became literary works at a later stage.¹⁹⁷ Each of these texts consisted of records taken during a lecture and edited later. Von Arnim's study of Dio Chrysostom of Prusa's (d. after 110) *Diatribes* (lectures on practical ethics) and *Sophistical Speeches* produced valuable insights on this issue.¹⁹⁸ He explained the occurrence of doublets in Dio's works—passages similar in substance, but often considerably divergent in wording, which follow each other in a text—with the repetition of a presentation by the same orator and the use of different students' records by the later redactor. The speeches in question were delivered from memory, but they were not genuinely extempore, since they required some preparation of the subject matter.¹⁹⁹

[41] The Greek language affords us an accurate terminological distinction between private written records intended as a mnemonic aid for a lecture (or a conversation) and literary works composed and redacted according to the canon of stylistic rules: the former type is called *hypomnēma*; the latter, *synggramma*.²⁰⁰ In the following discussion, we will apply these two terms to Arabic works as well. Another type of oral presentation recorded in writing, which we will not be able to examine here, is Christian homiletic literature.²⁰¹

More interesting for us is a third type, academic lectures written down by students, which we find very early on. Examples of such written records are works of Aristotle, Carneades, Epictetus, and Musonius.

We will now turn to exegetical teaching texts of late Alexandrian philosophers, which are chronologically closest to the rise of Islam; moreover, late Alexandrian teaching practices exerted some (indirect rather than direct) influence on the transmission methods in medicine and philosophy under Islam.

According to K. Praechter,²⁰² M. Richard,²⁰³ L. G. Westerink,²⁰⁴ and others, the exegetical teaching texts of the Alexandrians are for the most part lecture notes written down later, which the authors had not originally intended to be published.²⁰⁵ This can often be inferred from titles containing the phrase *apo phōnēs tou deinos* (from the mouth of so-and-so). Such is the case in a record Asclepius produced of [42] Ammonius' lecture courses on the *Metaphysics*; here, the name of the student appears side by side with the name of the professor. *Scholia ... Asklepiou apo phōnēs Ammoniou* (*The Commentaries of Asclepius from the*

Mouth of Ammonius). Similarly, in the Islamic context, we know of, for example, a *Tafsīr Warqāʿan Ibn ʿAbī Naġīḥan Muġāhid* (*The Qurʾān Commentary of Warqāʿ on the authority of Ibn ʿAbī Naġīḥ on the authority of Muġāhid*),²⁰⁶ that is, also here, the name of the student can appear side by side with the name of the teacher.

In both systems, we find books circulating under students' names which are no more than revised and supplemented transmissions of a teacher's works, for example, the *Tafsīr* (*Qurʾān Commentary*) and *Ġāmiʿ* (*The Compilation*) of ʿAbd ar-Razzāq ibn Hammām (d. 211/827), which for the most part reproduces material by Maʾmar ibn Rāṣid (d. 154/770).²⁰⁷ In late antique scholarly institutions we find

that a student, without thereby becoming guilty of any wrong-doing in the eyes of his teacher, disseminated his records under his own name alone.

When Proclus, then barely twenty years old, studied Plato's *Phaedo* with Plutarch, then advanced in years, he was encouraged by the latter to write down the exegesis with the remark, inciting his ambition, that there then would also be a *Phaedo* commentary by Proclus in circulation.²⁰⁸

The frequent parallel traditions in Arabo-Islamic compilations, that is, traditions similar or identical in content and traced back to the same narrator, but with different intermediary transmitters and often divergent wording, correspond to the doublets we find in Alexandrian lectures.²⁰⁹

In sum, the structure of Islamic *ṣanāʿ* conforms in many details to that of late Alexandrian lecture courses. The notebooks (*ḍafātir*) and "books" (*ḵatib*) Muslims used to record material "heard" from their teachers (cf. the frequent expression *ḵataba ʿan*)²¹⁰ are similar to the lecture notes *apo phōnēs* produced by students in Alexandria. The closest parallel to the exegetical teaching practices of the Alexandrians in early Islam is to be found in Qurʾānic exegesis. In both cases, lectures were based on a fixed text, on which a teacher commented. The students "heard" the commentary and took notes.

In that context, Alexandrian teaching methods have been described as follows: the lecturer had a copy of the work he was to comment on in his hand and referred to it in each step of his exegetical discussion.²¹¹ The exegesis itself was recorded in writing in the teacher's notebook. When [43] a lecture was repeated, teachers generally used to have recourse to the same notebook, "while occasional modifications of the text could be written down in the text or on loose sheets of paper or only be expressed orally."²¹²

An early Islamic *maġhils* devoted to Qurʾānic exegesis would probably have looked very similar.

Finally, there were certain similarities in the exegetical techniques, less in those applied in the heyday of the Alexandrian school²¹³ than in its later stage (starting with Stephanus, who flourished in the first half of the seventh century). Exant glosses on Aristotelian works by Stephanus²¹⁴ [44] resemble the mostly short and often purely philological explanations that older Qurʾānic exegetes such as Muġāhid inserted after the passages they commented on.²¹⁵

However, the similarities should not be overstressed. The late Alexandrian teaching system did not put as much emphasis on the "heard"/"audited" transmission as did Islam. In addition, we do not know whether the later distinction between *ṣamiʿ* (a teacher reads a work aloud) and *qirʾāh* (a student reads the work aloud) was already known to the Alexandrians.

Finally, the Alexandrian tradition displays only very rudimentary features of the Islamic *ṣinād* system (*apo phōnēs tou deinos*, from the mouth of so-and-so).

What we want to emphasize here are *structural similarities* between both systems, not direct dependencies.²¹⁶ although an indirect link with the Syrian and Persian Hellenistic school tradition serving as an intermediary would be plausible as well. These two traditions had adopted Alexandrian practices early on, especially in philosophy.²¹⁷ However, we still lack information on the actual teaching methods practised in [45] these schools and in monastic institutions around the time of the Islamic conquests.²¹⁸

Undoubtedly, the Islamic (religious) teaching system grew spontaneously, without outside interference, out of the need to teach the new religion. The chapters on *al-ʿilm* in *ḥadīṭ* collections reflect the oldest forms of religious instruction in Islam. The *Kiṭāb al-ʿilm* (*The Book of Knowledge*) in al-Buhārī's *as-Sahīḥ* (*The Sound [Compilation]*), for instance, shows us the Prophet sitting in a mosque and surrounded by a *ḥalqah*. He teaches his audience by repeating his words three times until they are understood.²¹⁹

During the time in which this simple teaching (but not yet transmission) method was developed into the Islamic *ḥadīṭ* system, outside influences could easily have left their imprint. These could have been Arabic, for example, the model provided by the transmission of poetry,²²⁰ as well as *external*, that is, Jewish tradition²²¹ and the late antique school system (not so much Alexandria itself as Hellenistic teaching practices in Syria and Persia). The mediators were probably *mawālī*-(clients) familiar with Hellenistic teaching methods. In the period under review (the end of the first and the first half of the second centuries AH, in particular), they started in growing numbers to engage in various Islamic sciences.

[46] Be that as it may, one thing is certain: there is a connection between late Alexandrian medical instruction on the one hand and the teaching of Christian Arab (and later Muslim) physicians in Bagdād on the other. Arab scholars themselves point this out: Humayn ibn Ishāq (d. 260/873), master translator and physician, describes medical instruction in Alexandria as follows: students used

to meet each day for a recitation (*qirʾāh*) and interpretation of one of his [sc. Galen's] main works . . . just as our Christian friends nowadays do, who meet each day at their places of teaching, called *usṭūl*, to study one of the main works of the ancients or one of the other (main) books.²²²

In this case as well, rather than a direct link, we should envision the relation between Alexandria and Bagdād as an indirect one. Medical instruction in Gondēšāpūr in Persia, which in turn had probably been shaped after Alexandria (and Antioch),

but had become more specialized and efficient,²²³ was literally closer to Bagdād than teaching in Alexandria. The tradition leading from Gondēšāpūr to Bagdād is illustrated by Humayn's academic career: he came from the town of al-Hīrah near the Persian border and was a student of Yūnannā 'bn Māsawayhi (d. 243/857), himself descendant of a family of physicians hailing from Gondēšāpūr.²²⁴ It is remarkable, though, that people in the third/ninth century Bagdād were still very much aware of the Alexandrian [47] roots of medical teaching methods.

In a similar vein, the philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) later describes the transfer of philosophical teaching from Alexandria to Bagdād. Remarkably, he traces its way through Syria (Antioch) and *Mesopotamia* (Harrān).²²⁵

II

In the field of grammar (in the strict sense, "linguistics": *naḥw*),²²⁶ Arab scholars seem to have written and published books (in the strict sense, *syngrammata*) relatively early (before [48] 184/800). 'Īsā 'bn 'Umar at-Taḡafī (d. 149/766), a teacher of al-Ḥalī ibn Ahmad (d. between 160/776 and 175/791), is said to have written two books, a *Kiṭāb al-ḡamr* and a *Kiṭāb al-mukmil*.²²⁷

We will turn to the question of whether al-Ḥalī ibn Ahmad wrote a book on grammar later on (cf. pp. 51–52).

Sībawayhi's (d. c. 180/796) *Kiṭāb* ("The Book"),²²⁸ the earliest extant comprehensive description of Arabic linguistics, is definitely a book in the strict sense. The work does indeed display characteristics of a book with a fixed shape. It is a "systematic description"²²⁹ with a clearly discernible, if still clumsy, arrangement of the contents. It is divided into chapters, addresses the reader directly (*'a-lā tarā, ʿilām ʿanna*: "do you not see", "know that"), [49] contains cross-references, etc. What is still missing is a preface and a title (chosen by the author).²³⁰

Sībawayhi mostly speaks in his own name, for example, throughout the first seven sections, later to be called *ar-Risālah* (*The Epistle*). But in subsequent parts of the work, he often quotes authorities. In these passages, his quotation method differs noticeably from that of the *ḥadīṭ* experts and is closer to modern procedures. The most frequently quoted authorities are al-Ḥalī ibn Ahmad and, substantially less often, Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 182/798), both of whom were his teachers. Relatively rarely, he quotes—via these two scholars—their teachers.²³¹ Introductory formulae of quotations rarely conform to the transmission formulae of *ḥadīṭ* scholars. The most commonly used introductory phrase for al-Ḥalī quotes is *ṣaḥlu-hū . . . fa-qāla*, "I asked him . . . and he answered" or similar expressions. They clearly refer to oral questions and answers.²³² The most frequent of the remaining introductory phrases are the terminologically indeterminate expressions *zayyana*, "he claimed" and *qāla*, "he said." We find very few instances of *ḥaddāṭa-nī-nā*, "he reported to me/us," a formula usually associated with *ṣamiʿ* in the field of *ḥadīṭ*, that is, a lecture held by a teacher on the basis of written records, heard by a student, and once more committed to writing, this time by the

student. The quotations in question contain arguments taken from discussions, teachings, theories, and viewpoints of teachers, not traditions (*ṭahādīṭ*) or "reports" (*ṭabāṭ*). One is left with the impression that Sībawayhi's quotations in most cases documented "discussions of the Basrian school."²³³

Once the *Kiṭāb Sībawayhi* (*Sībawayhi's Book*), a work fundamental enough to be called the "Qur'ān of grammar,"²³⁴ became available, a large part of subsequent scholarly activities in the field were devoted to commenting, extending, and supplementing it.²³⁵

[50] The method according to which the book was transmitted—better: studied—is *qir'āh*, that is, the work was read out by a student before a *ṣayh* (*qur'ra* *caḍa*) with the latter explaining it.²³⁶ However, it was not explained by the author himself, for apparently Sībawayhi was not able to teach the book to students in his lifetime, but by his friend and student al-Aḥfaṣ al-Awsat (d. 215/830).²³⁷ Incidentally, al-Aḥfaṣ's comments have partly survived in the form of marginal glosses to the text.²³⁸ Scholars such as Abū 'Uṣmān al-Māzini (d. 248/862)²³⁹ and Abū 'Umar al-Ġarnī (d. 225/839)²⁴⁰ "read" the *Kiṭāb* before al-Aḥfaṣ; al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898 or 286/899)²⁴¹ in turn "read" it before them and so on.

All of the grammarians listed above are Basrians. But also in Kūfah, scholars could not dispense with this fundamental text. Reports²⁴² indicate that al-Kisā'ī (d. 189/805), the former (unfair) opponent of Sībawayhi in *al-Mas'alah az-zunbūrīyah* (*The Question of the Wasp*) [a famous incident that took place in a second/eighth century grammatical debate], read the *Kiṭāb* before the Basrian al-Aḥfaṣ al-Awsat—secretly and for payment. Al-Kisā'ī's student al-Farrā' (d. 207/822) also owned the book—it is said to have been found under his head when he died.²⁴³ Finally, Ṭa'lab (d. 291/904) is said to have read the book "before himself,"²⁴⁴ that is, without a teacher.²⁴⁵

[51] A look at the unbroken line of (Basrian) transmitters of the *Kiṭāb Sībawayhi* suggests that, during the transmission of the work or rather of its manuscripts, a feature we do not find in the text itself could have emerged—chains of transmitters (*riwāyāt*) similar to those of *ḥadīṭ* scholars; *ṭisnāds* listing transmitters in an uninterrupted sequence from the last owner of the manuscript down to the very author. Good manuscripts present this type of *riwāyah* or *ṭisnād* (which we will from now on call the introductory *ṭisnād*) before the text itself begins. For example, we find them in the two Cairo manuscripts used by 'A. M. Harūn for his edition of Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb*.²⁴⁶ Here as well, the last part of the chain of transmitters leads (as expected) via al-Mubarrad—al-Māzini to al-Aḥfaṣ al-Awsat and Sībawayhi. In this case, something originally occurring only with individual *ḥadīṭis* and *ṭabāṭ* (reports) was applied to an entire book. The same phenomenon can later be observed with works in the field of *ḥadīṭ*, *fiqh*, and *tafsīr* as well as historical and philological books.²⁴⁷ Even texts which at the beginning did not have a definite, fixed form were affected.²⁴⁸

For the moment, we can record that *qir'āh* became the most natural transmission method once a text had attained the form of an actual book (*syngrama*).²⁴⁹ This holds for the Qur'ān—the *qir'āh* par excellence is the "reading," that is,

recitation, of the Qur'ān—as well as the classical medical texts alluded to by Hunayn ibn Ishāq (cf. p. 48) and, finally, for the first comprehensive work on Arabic linguistics, the "Qur'ān of grammar", Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb*.

We have to return once more to the transmitters of the *Kiṭāb Sībawayhi* listed earlier on this page. It should be remembered that they (al-Aḥfaṣ al-Awsat, al-Ġarnī, al-Māzini, al-Mubarrad, al-Kisā'ī, al-Farrā', and Ṭa'lab) are at the same time the most important grammarians (in the strict sense, "linguists") of the first 100 years after Sībawayhi. All [52] of these scholars are connected by the fact that they have "read" the *Kiṭāb Sībawayhi*. This was done with authorized transmitters, at least in the case of the Basrians. Qutrūb (d. 206/821) is an interesting exception: he is explicitly reported to have heard Sībawayhi without, however, having "read" the *Kiṭāb* before him or anybody else.²⁵⁰

Although "reading" the *Kiṭāb* and explaining it undoubtedly occupied center stage in grammatical studies from the time of al-Aḥfaṣ al-Awsat, the grammatical discussion circles (*ḥalagāt* or *maḡālīs*) of the grammarians, which predated Sībawayhi and al-Ḥallī ibn Ahmad, still existed.²⁵¹ The discussions taking place in these circles during and after Sībawayhi's lifetime are documented in later *maḡālīs* and *ṭamāl* works.

We now turn to a question which has once more become the subject of discussion in recent times: did al-Ḥallī ibn Ahmad, who, according to the study by Reuschel, taught grammar as comprehensively as Sībawayhi,²⁵² also write a book? We can give a definite answer to this question which was answered in the negative by Reuschel²⁵³ and in the affirmative by Sezgin²⁵⁴: al-Ḥallī did not write such a book. He disseminated his knowledge exclusively through scientific conversations, discussions, lectures, and so on. His claim that al-Ḥallī wrote a book on grammar not only puts Sezgin in opposition to the results of Reuschel and his thorough analysis of al-Ḥallī quotations in Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb*, but it also conflicts with the unanimous view of Arab biographers and philologists. Their consensus is expressed in the introduction to az-Zubaydī's (d. 379/989) *Muḥtaṣar Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* (*The Epitome of the Book of [the Letter] 'Ayn*):²⁵⁵

He [sc. al-Ḥallī] it was who gave a (comprehensive) description of grammar . . . afterwards (however) he did not allow himself to write down (even) a single word about it or record a sketch of it . . . because before him, people had worked on it and written (books) about it.²⁵⁶ He disliked being one of those who followed his predecessors . . . And he was content in this respect with the knowledge he [53] gave Sībawayhi . . . Sībawayhi received [literally: "carried"] it [sc. knowledge] from him, took it over and wrote the Book about it.

Irrespective of the truth of az-Zubaydī's explanation, the fact that al-Ḥallī did not write a book on grammar is undoubtedly true. This conclusion is borne out by an examination of the terminology biographers and philologists use to characterize

the relationship of *Ṣibawayhi* and al-Ḥaṭṭī in the matter of *taḥammul al-ilm* (the taking over of knowledge).

For *Ṣibawayhi*, biographies very frequently use phrases such as *ʿamila kitābā-hū* ('he produced' his book),²⁵⁷ *kāna ʿallāmam ḥasan al-tasnīf* ('he was a scholar good at composing [a literary work]'),²⁵⁸ or even *fa-ʿallafa kitābā-hū* 'laḍi samā-hu n-nās *Qurʾān an-naḥw*' ('he then composed his book which people called the 'Qurʾān of grammar').²⁵⁹ These phrases unequivocally point to *Ṣibawayhi*'s (unquestioned) authorship of the Book. Equivalent expressions are absent in the case of al-Ḥaṭṭī. Regarding him, the sources say for example: *kāna ḡāyaan fī ʿsṯirāḡ masāʾil an-naḥw* ('he excelled in solving grammatical questions'),²⁶⁰ Of *Ṣibawayhi*, we find the following information: *lam yaqrʾ ʾahad Kitāb Ṣibawayhi ʿalay-hi wa-inna-mā qurʾa baʿda-hū ʿalā ʾl-ʾAḥṣāʾ* ('nobody read' *Ṣibawayhi*'s Book before him, but after him [his death], it was 'read' before al-Aḥṣāʾ'),²⁶¹ of al-Ḥaṭṭī, however, the biographers only report that *Ṣibawayhi* or some other student *ʾahadā n-naḥw ʿan-hu* ('learned grammar from him'),²⁶² that *ḡālasa ʾl-Ḥaṭṭī . . . wa-ʿayyadā ʿan-hu maḍāhibā-hū fī n-naḥw* ('he took part in al-Ḥaṭṭī's sessions . . . and adopted from him his grammatical methods'),²⁶³ and that *ʾahadā ʿan al-Ḥaṭṭī ḡamāʿah lam yakun fī-him miḥ Ṣibawayhi* ('a group [of grammarians] 'took' [sc. knowledge] from al-Ḥaṭṭī, but none of them was equal to *Ṣibawayhi*').²⁶⁴

Had al-Ḥaṭṭī written a "book on grammar" or had the biographers at least assumed him to have done so, we would invariably find phrases such as *ʿallafa ʿamila ʾl-Ḥaṭṭī kitābā-hū* ('al-Ḥaṭṭī composed/produced' his book') and *qurʾa [54] kitāb al-Ḥaṭṭī ʿalā* ('the book of al-Ḥaṭṭī was 'read' before') or *lam yaqrʾa kitābā-hū ʿalay-hi ʾahad* ('no one 'read' his book before him', as we find in the case of Abū ʿAmr aṣ-Ṣaybānī's *Kitāb al-ḡim*, *The Book of [the Letter] ḡim*; cf. p. 54).

In this context, I would venture the suggestion²⁶⁵ that the title of *Ṣibawayhi*'s work that was probably not chosen by the author²⁶⁶ and which was understood later to be simply *al-Kitāb*, the Book (par excellence),²⁶⁷ was originally simply *Kitāb Ṣibawayhi*, which meant no more than "the written elaboration [sc. of the grammatical teachings of al-Ḥaṭṭī, Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb and others] by *Ṣibawayhi*."

To sum up, al-Ḥaṭṭī did not write a book on grammar. On the other hand, we cannot exclude the possibility that he possessed notes on specific grammatical problems and used written records for his lectures.²⁶⁸ Using written records in this restricted manner would have been in conformity with accepted contemporary practices in the transmission of knowledge.

At all events, al-Ḥaṭṭī was not a scholar who "shunned paper and book."²⁶⁹ On the contrary, in fields other than grammar, he composed several writings, possibly even books in the strict sense. We are best informed about his book on metrics, the *Kitāb al-ʿarīd* (*The Book of Prosody*, consisting of the two parts *Kitāb al-farṣ* and *Kitāb al-mīāl*). The extant text is not the original, but a revised version preserved in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *Kitāb al-ʿiqd al-farīd* (*The Book of the Unique Necklace*). In his *Muḥjaṣar Kitāb al-ʿayn* (*The Epitome of the Book of [the Letter]*

ʿayn), however, az-Zubayrī explicitly attests—after denying the existence of a grammatical book by al-Ḥaṭṭī—that the book on metrics was a literary work in the strict sense: "he then wrote in an inventive and innovative way the two books *al-Farṣ* and *al-Mīāl* on metrics and summarized all poetic metres in them."²⁷⁰

In addition, a [55] recent study on the sources of the *Kitāb al-ʿiqd al-farīd* found that in the case of the *Kitāb al-ʿarīd* (*The Book of Prosody*), there was undoubtedly a text going back to al-Ḥaṭṭī in circulation.²⁷¹

We will now turn to lexicography, a subdiscipline of philology. As Versteegh correctly emphasized,²⁷² it has to be strictly distinguished from the cognate discipline of grammar ('linguistics'). Lexicographers study "the speech of (the pure) Arabs and their rare terms"²⁷³; they devote themselves to "knowledge of poetry and rare terms."²⁷⁴ In modern terms, they deal with "the semantic aspect of the linguistic sign."²⁷⁵

Philology brought forth teaching practices which were very similar to those of *ḥadīṯ* scholars, Qurʾān exegetes, and historians, and substantially different from those of grammarians. Grammarians also quoted authorities and worked with transmitted material, but in addition, they applied rational procedures, namely *qiyās* (analogical deduction), to it. There are several reasons for the similarity in teaching practices between philology and *ḥadīṯ*: glosses of difficult terms and correct readings (*riwāyāt*, literally "transmissions") of poems had to be traced back to authorities; for a correct understanding of a poem, different kinds of facts had to be reported; and these explanations and reports in turn were transmitted from generation to generation with exact information as to the transmitters.

A particularly good example for a work, the form of which can only be explained with reference to the specifics of philological teaching practices, is the *Kitāb nawādir fī ʾl-luḡah* (*The Book of Lexicographical Rareities*).²⁷⁶ The core material originated with Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī (d. 215/830), but the work was extended and transmitted by generations of scholars following Abū Zayd.²⁷⁷

[56] In the genre of "dictations" (*ʿamālī*, also *maḡālīs*), "which had emerged with traditionists and legal scholars from the custom of dictating material on one or more subjects to interested listeners in successive sessions"²⁷⁸ philologists followed the methods of *ḥadīṯ* experts. In the *Maḡālīs Taṣlaḥ*,²⁷⁹ the *Maḡālīs*²⁸⁰ and *ʿAmālī ʾl-Zaḡḡāḡī*²⁸¹ as well as the *ʿAmālī ʾl-Qāṭī*,²⁸² the dictation sessions with their very diverse topics consist of numerous separate traditions, each of which have an *isnād* and a *maṭn* (see Glossary). The narrator can be either the author—but only if he, like al-Qāṭī, later edited his dictations himself—or one of his students, who took notes (cf. the first *ʿisnāds* in the *ʿAmālī ʾl-Zaḡḡāḡī*, which begin with *qāla* or *ʾahbara-nā ʾAbū ʾl-Qāsim az-Zaḡḡāḡī*, "Abū ʾl-Qāsim az-Zaḡḡāḡī said" or "informed us"); or even a student's student (cf. the first *ʿisnāds* in the *Maḡālīs Taṣlaḥ*, where we read *ʾahbara-nā Muḥammad* [= ibn Miqṣam] *ḥaddāṭa-nā ʾAbū ʾl-ʿAbbās Taṣlaḥ*, "Muḥammad [= ibn Miqṣam] informed us: Abū ʾl-ʿAbbās Taṣlaḥ reported to us"). Usually, the eye witness of the event in question or the initial transmitter of the report (the narrator) are listed as the last element of the *ʿisnād*.

A specific feature of philological/lexical *ṣamāʿ* is the fact that in addition to "learned" *ṣawḥs*, so-called Bedouins "of pristine speech" (*fusaḥāʾ al-ʿarab*) could be referred to as authorities of equal standing. Thus, as-Suyūnī entitles the first section (on the subject of *ṣamāʿ*) of the first chapter of his *Muzhir* (*The Florescent Book [on the Linguistic Sciences]*) dealing with *taḥammul al-ʿilm* (the taking over of knowledge) as follows: *as-ṣamāʿ min lafẓ aṣ-ṣayḥaw al-ʿarabī*, literally "listening to the words of the teacher or the Bedouin."²⁸³

In lexicography, there was no single book which, similar to the *Kiṭāb Ṣḥawḥi* in [57] grammar, attained to the rank of a "Qurʾān" of the subject and attracted such a large amount of scholarly attention. However, from the end of the second/eighth and the beginning of the third/ninth centuries, lexicographers also wrote books in the strict sense (*syngrammata*). If we overlook the unclear case of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, Abū ʿAmr aṣ-Ṣaybānī's (d. c.205/820) *Kiṭāb al-ġim* (*The Book of [the Letter] Ġim*)²⁸⁴ is an example of a book with a fixed form. About the author, we read:

The *Kiṭāb al-ġim*: it was not transmitted, because Abū ʿAmr was 'niggardly' with it, so that nobody read it before him (ʿammā *Kiṭāb al-ġim fa-lā riwāyah la-hū li-ʿanna ʾAbū ʿAmr baḥila bi-hī ʿalā ʾn-nās fa-lam yaqrʿ-hu ʿalay-hi ʾaḥad*).²⁸⁵

An author of numerous books in the strict sense, some of which are extant, is Abū ʿUbayd (d. 224/838). We can infer this much from the wording of Abū ʿUbayd's biographers, just as we can infer from the wording of al-Ḥaṭīl ibn Ahmad's biographers that the latter did *not* write a book on grammar.

At the beginning of the relevant article in his book on grammatical and philological scholars, Abū ʾi-Tayyib al-Luġawī (d. 351/962)²⁸⁶ states:

Abū ʿUbayd is an author good at composing (literary) works, but he possessed (only) little transmission [i.e. he had not heard many of the works before teachers but only copied from books instead] (*muṣannif ḥasan al-ʿaṭf ʾillā ʿanna-hū qafīl ar-riwāyah*).

and at the end:²⁸⁷ "Abū ʿUbayd used to bring his (edited) works (*muṣannaʿat*) immediately to the kings."²⁸⁸ They then awarded him for it. This is why his (edited) works are so numerous." Modern Western research has stressed that Abū ʿUbayd's works "are based on the previous research of other scholars, but Abū ʿUbayd, in using them, wrote the standard works on these subjects which superseded his forerunners and were used and frequently quoted by all the later authors."²⁸⁹

However, the character of Abū ʿUbayd's sources, for example, those of his *Kiṭāb al-ġarīb al-muṣannaʿ* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary]*, *Arranged Systematically*, a dictionary of rare words, arranged according to subjects) is still controversial. When he quotes older or contemporary authorities (such as al-Aṣmaʿī [d. 213/828], Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī [d. 215/830], or Abū ʿUbaydah

[d. 207/822]), does he rely on oral or written sources? In line with the practice of the genre, he only mentions authors, never titles of quoted texts.

Indigenous scholars in fact explicitly mention—in a tone of disapproval—that he copied *books* in his *a-Ġarīb al-muṣannaʿ* and other works. Abū ʾi-Tayyib al-Luġawī writes:

His book entitled *a-Ġarīb al-muṣannaʿ*: he relied in it on a book written by someone from the Banū Ḥāšim, who had compiled it for himself.²⁹⁰ He then took the books of al-Aṣmaʿī, divided their content into chapters and added some of Abū Zayd's knowledge as well as traditions from the Kufāns... The Basrians say that the majority of what he reports on the authority of their scholars is not *ṣamāʿ*, but was derived from books. Some passages from his book *a-Ġarīb al-muṣannaʿ* were held against him and (indeed), he did not have a good command of the desinential inflection.²⁹¹

In his thesis on the *Kiṭāb al-ġarīb al-muṣannaʿ*, Abdel-Tawab objected to the reports.²⁹² He tried to prove that Abū ʿUbayd drew his material entirely from oral and not from written tradition. To that end, he searched for explanations rare words ascribed by Abū ʿUbayd to named philologists in extant works of the philologists, works the content of which could have been germane to the content *a-Ġarīb al-muṣannaʿ*.²⁹³ When he found any equivalents at all (very often, there were none), their wording turned out to be merely similar, but never identical to Abū ʿUbayd's explanations. According to Abdel-Tawab, this proves that ʿUbayd did not derive his material from *written works* (books) of the quoted authorities; it moreover confirms his exclusive use of *oral* tradition. Therefore claims to the contrary made by Arab philologists and biographers must, according to Abdel-Tawab, be mistaken.²⁹⁴

Abdel-Tawab's findings were disputed by Sezgin.²⁹⁵ To explain the attested discrepancies between Abū ʿUbayd's [59] quotations from allegedly written sources on the one hand and the actual text of extant versions of these sources on the other he proposes an (alleged) practice of Abū ʿUbayd, that of transmitting not *interruptions* (*ar-riwāyah bi-l-laḳẓ*), but *freely* (*ar-riwāyah bi-l-muṣnaʿ*), a method Sezgin qualifies as detrimental to the works in question.²⁹⁶ In another passage, he refers to the existence of different recensions of Abū ʿUbayd's sources.²⁹⁷

On the basis of the theory developed in Chapter 1 (cf. the summary on p. 4) the contradiction between the findings of Abdel-Tawab and Sezgin is easily solved.

Abdel-Tawab's study proves only that Abū ʿUbayd did not quote from the versions of al-Aṣmaʿī, Abū Zayd, and so on, in the form *extant and available to us now*. We would not expect this anyway with works that (like those quoted by Abū ʿUbayd) were not finalized and put into a fixed shape by their authors.

In written form, they existed solely as the written notes of their authors and in sometimes considerably divergent lecture notes and further transmissions recorded by students.

This is borne out by a cursory examination of, for example, the two extant versions of the *Kitāb al-ibīl 'an al-Asma'ī* (*The Book of Camels on the Authority of al-Asma'ī*).²⁹⁸ Apart from other substantial differences, the first version is more than three times as long as the second. It is, in fact, possible that Abū 'Ubayd quoted from a copy (lecture notes) of another version of this "book" in circulation at the time; Abdel-Tawab observes: "Definitions given in the *Garīb al-musannaf* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary]*) on the authority of al-Asma'ī are sometimes similar to those from the *Kitāb al-ibīl* [better: on the authority of (*can*)] al-Asma'ī."²⁹⁹

It is only to be expected that their wording is never identical (as Abdel-Tawab subsequently notes): it would be a very strange coincidence indeed if Abū 'Ubayd had incidentally gotten hold of one of the versions which has survived—in later transmission—to this day.

Information about the form in which al-Asma'ī's books were disseminated and what could happen to them in transmission can be gleaned from the following report from the preface to al-Azharī's (d. 370/980) lexicon *Tahdīb al-luġah* (*The Refinement of Language*)³⁰⁰:

Al-Asma'ī had dictated a book on *nawādir* (lexical rarities) in Bagdād. Soon, material was added to this book which did not come from al-Asma'ī. When a certain person [60] showed him a copy of the book ascribed to him, he immediately noticed the additions. He said: "If you want me to indicate to you what I retain in my memory (as correct) [or: what I want to retain] from it (*valiḥaḏu*) and to delete the rest, I will do it. If not, you should not read it." It then emerged that he rejected more than one-third.

What the study of Abdel-Tawab therefore does *not* prove is that Abū 'Ubayd relied exclusively on oral traditions. We do not have any reason to mistrust the early Arab philologists, who report that Abū 'Ubayd often merely copied material from "books," that is, more or less correct, unauthorized lecture notes, without "hearing" them from an authority. Thus far, we concur with Sezgin and his proposition that the *Kitāb al-ġarīb al-musannaf* employed written sources and that these existed in different versions.

Incorrect, on the other hand, are Sezgin's notions about the form of Abū 'Ubayd's sources: he imagines them to be books with fixed texts, which might have been available in different, authorized "editions" or "recensions." Thus, he is forced to ascribe the differences between the text of the compiler Abū 'Ubayd and these "books" to the (alleged) disadvantages of *ar-rīwāyah bi-l-mar'atā* (transmission according to the sense, or gist [without paying heed to the actual wording]). As far as I can see, there is no evidence in the biographical literature to prove that this was Abū 'Ubayd's practice in the first place!

To round off this section, we will now turn to the transmission of the extant works of Abū 'Ubayd, which were predominantly books in the strict sense.

From the introductory *ʿisnāds* (*rīwāyat*) of one manuscript of the *Kitāb al-ġarīb al-ḥadīṭ* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary] in the Ḥadīṭ*)³⁰¹ and one manuscript of the *Kitāb al-umtāl* (*The Book of Proverbs*),³⁰² we can infer that Abū 'Ubayd's most important transmitter, Alī 'bn 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 287/900), "read both works before his teacher, thus applying the practice of *qir'ah*. (A further manuscript of the *Kitāb al-ḥadīṭ*³⁰³ as well as the manuscripts of the *Kitāb al-ġarīb al-musannaf* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary]*, *Arranged Systematically*), available to [61] me through descriptions, are uninformative in this respect; the respective transmission formulae used in the introductory *ʿisnāds*—*qāla* or "he said", "on the authority of"³⁰⁴—are unspecific.)

The introductory *ʿisnād* (or *rīwāyah*) of the only surviving manuscript of Al-Asma'ī's *Kitāb an-nāṣiḥ wa-l-manṣiḥ fī l-Qur'ān* (*The Book of the Abrogation and the Abrogated in the Qur'ān*)³⁰⁵ as well as several *ʿisnāds* in the text of the book³⁰⁶ show that, in some cases, Abū 'Ubayd himself recited his works before his students, that is, transmitted them through the practice of *sanāʿ*.

This raises the following question: under which circumstances was *sanāʿ* considered to be the appropriate transmission method for finalized (philological) work? In this context, two anecdotes contained in al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Tarīḥ Bagdād* article³⁰⁷ on Abū 'Ubayd [62] are particularly instructive. They suggest that Al-Asma'ī (and probably others as well) used the more laborious method as a favor accorded to highly respected colleagues, while it was employed as a matter course with higher-ranking personalities.

Abū 'Ubayd had consented to recite the *Kitāb al-ḥadīṭ* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary] in the Ḥadīṭ*) to a gathering of scholars in al-Ḥim ibn Ḥanbal's house. After a critical remark by the traditionalist 'Alī 'bn al-Madīnī (d. 235/849), whom he did not know personally, he angrily retorted: "([Previously] I have only recited it to (the caliph) al-Ma'mūn. If you want read it, read it (yourselves)!") Only after learning that he was talking to the famous 'Alī 'bn al-Madīnī did he start to lecture. Each participant—and in one else!—was now entitled to transmit the work presented to him by *sanāʿ* with the formula *ḥaddatā-ni*. In another case, Abū 'Ubayd adamantly refused to recite the *Kitāb al-ġarīb al-musannaf* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary]*, *Arranged Systematically*) to the philologist Ibn as-Sikkī (d. 244/858) in a private lecture.

The further transmission of the works of Abū 'Ubayd was primarily accomplished by *qir'ah*. This is indicated by the predominance of the phrase *qar'atuh qar'atā 'alā*, "I/we read before" (which certainly marks *qir'ah*) *ḡalbara-ni-nā*, "he informed me/us" (which probably points to *qir'ah*) in the relevant *ʿisnāds*.³⁰⁸

Like the *Kitāb Sībawayhi* (*Sībawayhi's Book*), Abū 'Ubayd's "standard work" occasioned the writing of commentaries (which could be based on glosses and explanations of the work in a lecture), addenda, supplements, abridgements, corrections, and so on. This is precisely what happened to the *Kitāb al-ġarīb al-musannaf* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary]*, *Arranged Systematically*).³

the *Kitāb ǧarīb al-hadīth* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary] in the Hadīth*),³¹⁰ and the *Kitāb al-amāl* (*The Book of Proverbs*).³¹¹

Also for the field of philology, we have now established that, as a rule, once a finalized book was at hand, *qirʿah* was the most suitable form of transmission, which usually went hand in hand with the explanation of a work by a teacher.

[63] In the following section, we will see that the same situation prevailed (to an even higher degree) in medico-philosophical teaching.

III

Let us now leave the field of philology and turn to medico-philosophical teaching. From a passage in Hunayn ibn Isḥāq's *Epistle* quoted above,³¹² we know that the transmission of knowledge in this discipline was similar to the system already employed in Alexandria: teacher and students together read and commented on one of the classics. Later sources inform us that a student read out sections of the work under discussion before a teacher (*qarʿa ʿalā*) and that the teacher commented on the sections during which he could also dictate his comments for his students to write down.

In this way, the Nestorian priest, physician, and philosopher Abū ʿI-Farāǧ ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿIyyīb (d. 435/1043) went through Galen's *70 Glaukon* with his students at Bagdād's ʿAḍḍī hospital.³¹³ From Ibn al-ʿIyyīb's dictated explanations, taken down by a student (*hypomnema*), a new book, a commentary, could arise. About Ibn al-ʿIyyīb, we hear that the majority of his works "used to be transmitted on his authority through dictation after his own words" (*kānat tunqulu ʿan-hu ʿimlāʿan min lafẓi-hi*).³¹⁴ For his medico-philosophical teaching, we can establish something like an *ʿismāʾ* similar to the longer or shorter chains of poetical transmitters of ancient Arabic poetry³¹⁵ or, in grammar, the unbroken line of transmitters of the *Kitāb Ṣībawayhi* (cf. p. 50):

Ibn al-ʿIyyīb studied with al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār, called Ibn al-Ḥammār (d. 411/1020),³¹⁶ he in turn "read before" (*qarʿa ʿalā*) Yahyā ʿbn ʿAdī (d. 363/974),³¹⁷ Yahyā "read before" Abū Biṣr Maṭṭā (d. 328/940) and al-Fārābī (d. 339/950),³¹⁸ [64] finally, Abū Biṣr allegedly "read before" the monks Rūfī (?), Benjamin, and others.³¹⁹

Ibn al-ʿIyyīb's most important student was the Nestorian physician Ibn Buṭlān (d. 458/1066). About him, we read that he was "good at reading" (*qirʿah*) many medico-philosophical (*ḥakīmāh*) and other books "before" his teacher.³²⁰ Ibn al-Qiṭṭī (d. 646/1248) claims that in one of Ibn al-ʿIyyīb's commentaries, he saw the copy (*mīṭā*) of a notice in the author's own hand confirming to his student Ibn Buṭlān that he had read the book from beginning to end before him.³²¹

In the first section of *al-Maqālāh al-misrīyah*, the "Egyptian treatise," his medico-philosophical dispute with Ibn Ridwān (d. 453/1061),³²² Ibn Buṭlān has left us a discussion of "the causes why something learnt from oral instruction by teachers is better and easier to understand than something learnt from books, given that the receptive faculty of both (of the students) be the same."³²³

Ibn Buṭlān lists seven reasons for his assumption which can be summarized follows:

- 1 A transfer of ideas from the homogenous to the homogenous (namely teacher—student) is more feasible than from the heterogenous to the heterogenous (namely book—student).
- 2 In contrast to books, a teacher can replace words not understood by the student with other words.
- 3 There is a natural reciprocal relation between teaching and learning; therefore learning from a teacher is more appropriate for a student than learning from a book.
- 4 [65] The spoken word is not as far removed from the intended meaning as the written word. The word coined in the mind (the term) is already nothing more than a simile of the intended meaning; it is based on (the substratum). Therefore, the spoken word is a simile of a simile. The written word in turn is no more than a simile thrice removed.
- 5 In the process of *qirʿah* (the reading out of the book by the student), knowledge is mediated to the student by *two* senses, ear and eye. As the sense most appropriate (homogenous) to the word, however, hearing plays the most important role.
- 6 Books are vulnerable to certain problems that are detrimental to understanding a text and which do not occur in a teaching situation (or are quickly taking care of): ambiguous terms, miswritings caused by letters without diacritical points, copyists' mistakes and such, the insufficient knowledge of desinent inflection, the absence or corruption of vowel signs (i.e. all the defects that are occasioned by peculiarities of the Arabic script), and other issues. Furthermore, there are, among others, the (difficult) style of a work, the author's (special) manner of expression, the corruption of manuscripts and their faulty transmission, and, lastly, untranslated Greek terms.
- 7 The commentators unanimously agree that a certain Aristotelian passage would never have been understood if Aristotle's students Theophrastus and Eudemus had not heard it from the master and had it explained by him. Current opinion confirms this: see the pejorative appellations *ṣūḥuf* ("someone who takes his knowledge only from notebooks") for a (pseudo)scholar who has not frequented learned men or *muḥarrif* (roughly "dilettante") for someone who has not learned from (at least) two experienced masters. The content reserved for students and even scholars who have not frequented learned men is documented by the fact that people avoid books without a teacher's note confirming a student's personal attendance at his lectures.

Ibn Buṭlān's reason for discussing this subject in his correspondence with Ibn Ridwān is well-known: the latter was an autodidact and allegedly wrote a book on the fact that "learning the (medical) art from books is preferable to that from teachers."³²⁴ For the Christian Ibn Buṭlān, who had studied with such eminent

authorities in the field as Ibn al-Tayyib, it must have been a special treat to confront his Muslim adversary (among others) with those arguments in favor of the "heard"/"audited" transmission which Muslim [66] scholars had been advancing for a long time in validation of its advantages over "merely written" transmission!

The new elements in Ibn Buṭlān's argument can be identified by comparing it with a passage from Ibn Qutaybah's *Kiṭāb al-šīr wa-š-šarāḥ* (*The Book of Poetry and Poets*)³²⁵ or a similar discussion in al-Azharī's *Tahḏīb al-luḡah* (*The Refinement of Language*),³²⁶ which argue in a similar manner for "audited" or "heard" transmission.

On a *subḥfī*, "whose capital is the notebooks he has read," al-Azharī makes the following remark:

He frequently misplaces the diacritical points, because he reports (material) from 'books' he has not heard and from notebooks, of whose contents he does not know whether they are right or wrong. Most of the material we have read from notebooks which were not properly punctuated and which had not been corrected by experts is *weak*; only the ignorant rely on it.

New in Ibn Buṭlān's account are points 1, 3, 4, and 5, in which he applies his philosophical knowledge and philosophical terminology. Point 6 and the second part of point 7, however, are simply adaptations and extensions of familiar arguments advanced by *ḥadīṭ* scholars and philologists to show that *ḥadīṭ* and poetry should not just be copied from notebooks.

Fears about mistakes in writing and reading based on the peculiarities of the Arabic script could have been a very real issue at the time: Ibn Buṭlān's contemporary, the Christian physician Sā'id ibn al-Ḥasan, writing in 464/1072, reports in his *Kiṭāb al-taṣwīq al-tibbī* (*Arousing Longing for Medicine*) about cases in which the wrong punctuation in the name of drugs had lethal consequences.³²⁷

At the beginning of this chapter,³²⁸ we had allowed for the possibility that methods of the late antique teaching tradition may have influenced the learning and teaching practices in the early Arabo-Islamic sciences. We can now confidently assert that in later times, teaching methods of Islamic *ḥadīṭ* scholars had an impact on those of medico-philosophical instruction, which was still to a large part controlled by non-Muslims. This is borne out by the fact that Ibn al-Tayyib (if not an earlier physician before him) wrote explicit *qirā'ah* notes for [67] his students into the books read before him³²⁹ and that such notes are not infrequent in medical manuscripts as well.³³⁰ We also know, for example, of manuscripts read before 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī (d. 629/1231) which contain such an authentication by the famous physician.³³¹

Finally, we have to bear in mind that in this field we have once again to do with *heard*, not *oral* transmission. Even more naturally than in the case of *ḥadīṭ*, "reports" (*ṣaḥāb*), philological and grammatical material, and so on, teaching is based on a written record (and in this case on a book in the proper sense), which

was read aloud and commented on. Ibn Buṭlān's fifth argument (apparently a new idea) even assigns the eyes a certain auxiliary role in learning (though only to the reader and not the other listeners may profit from the sense of sight).

Addenda

P. 48

At this moment, I no longer believe that there was a linear development leading from the kind of plain religious instruction which was—according to the *Kiṭāb al-ilm* (*The Book of Knowledge*) in al-Buḡārī's *as-Saḥīḥ* (*The Sound Compilation*)—dispensed by the Prophet and the later system of *ḥadīṭ* transmission. Rather, this system was introduced in the last third of the first/seventh century, beginning with systematic collections by scholars such as 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr.³³²

According to G. Strohmaier, Hunayn's "Christian friends" did "not study medical works of the 'ancients', but rather their theological and philosophical books."³³³ If this is correct, we could only cite Hunayn's testimony as *general* evidence for the continuity between late Alexandrian and Arabo-Christian teaching practices, not as proof for the migration of *medical* teaching practices "from Alexandria to Baghdad." See further Lameer (1997) and Gutas (1999).

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I now believe that Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb* ("The Book") was originally an epistle (*risālah*); note that the first seven sections of the book were called *ar-Risālah* (*Epistle*).³³⁴

Possibly, al-Ḥalī's *Kiṭāb al-ṣanād* (*The Book of Prosoḍ*) belonged to the general literature of the school for the school destined for oral lectures." Compare la Chapter 6, especially p. 151.

Pp. 58–59, III

On this issue, compare my remarks concerning p. 48.

WRITING AND PUBLISHING

On the use and function of writing in early Islam

I

Without writing, the following would be useless: contracts (*uḥūd*), stipulations in contracts (*ṣūrai*), authentic records (*ṣigillat*), promissory notes (or: statements of commercial transactions, *ṣiḥāḥ*), every granting of land (*ʿiqṭāʿ*), every remittance (*ʿinṣāq*), every letter of protection (*ʿamān*), every contract (*ʿahd*) and treaty (*ʿaḡd*), every arrangement of protection (*ḡiwār*) and confederacy (*ḥilf*). To emphasize the significance of all these things in order to be able to rely on them and to put trust in them, the people in pre-Islamic times used to call on people who would record alliances and truces in writing on their behalf, because they considered the matter to be so important and wanted to keep it from being forgotten.³³⁵

The use of writing for contracts, letters, and other important types of documents al-Ġalīz (d. 255/868–869) lists in this passage in fact probably dates back to the *ḡāhiliyyah* (the period before Islam).³³⁶ Without doubt, written contracts, letters [2] and the like existed in the period during which Islam emerged—prominent examples are as follows: the Qurʾānic command to have debts recorded by a scribe (*Sūrah* 2: 282)³³⁷; the Prophet's famous Constitution of Medina³³⁸ and his equally well-known treaty of al-Hudaybiyah³³⁹; and, finally, the numerous epistles which Muhammad sent to various Arab tribes.³⁴⁰ Contemporary poetry also testifies to the existence of written contracts. The Medinese Qays ibn al-Ḥaṭīm (d. 620) says:³⁴¹

When, in the early morning, their battle lines appear/the relatives and
leaves [i.e. treaties] call for us
lammaḇ badat ḡudwatan ḡibāḥu-ḥumūḥ/ḥammat ʿilay-nā ʾl-ʿarḥāmu wa-ʾṣ-ṣu-ḥufu

Since it is highly unlikely that the use of writing for these purposes emerged exactly during the lifetime of the Prophet, we can confidently assume that, at least in the Arab urban centers, writing was already practised before Islam.³⁴²

Arabic tradition contains reports about written treaties concluded during the *ḡāhiliyyah* (the period before Islam). While it will not be maintained here that all these reports are historical, they can at least be read as valuable sources for the customs and conventions observed in the conclusion of treaties in ancient times.

In the scholia to his recension of Ḥassān ibn Tābir's (d. c. 50/670) *Dīwān* (collected poems), Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/860) writes about an alliance (*ḥilf*) between the tribe of al-Ḥuzāʿah and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of the Prophet. [3] It runs³⁴³: "They entered the house of the council and drafted writing a document between them (*katābū bayʿa-ḥum kīlāban*)... and suspended the document inside the Ka'bah." A little later, he writes: "Between them, they drafted in writing a document written out for them by Abū Qays ibn ʿAbd Maḥdraf ibn Zuhrah... and the document ran as follows:..."

The *Sūrah*³⁴⁴ mentions another agreement concluded two generations later, at Mecca. Confronted with a thriving Islamic community, the Qurayš are said to have agreed among themselves not to marry people from the Banū Ḥāšim and Banū Muṭṭalib. The *Sūrah* reports:

They met and deliberated on drawing up a document (*katābū kīlā-ban*), in which they agreed to boycott the Banū Ḥāšim and the Banū Muṭṭalib... And when they had decided on that, they wrote it on a sheet (*ṣahīfah*) and solemnly agreed on the points; then, they suspended the sheet inside the Ka'bah (*fi ḡawf al-kaʿbah*) to remind them of their obligations (*tawakkīdan ʿala ʿanfusiḥim*). The writer of the sheet was Maṇṣūr ibn ʿIkrimah ibn ʿĀmir ibn Ḥāšim ibn ʿAbd Manāf..., but it is also said that it was an-Nadr ibn al-Ḥārī.

For our purposes, two features of these reports are to be stressed. First, the writer's name is mentioned; this occurs several times in such reports.³⁴⁵ Thus, we are told that ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/660) was ordered by the Prophet to write down the truce of al-Hudaybiyah.³⁴⁶ That the name of the scribe is listed does not come as a surprise in a society in which writing was still considered an "art" and consequently highly valued.³⁴⁷ In addition, the scribe vouched with his name for the truth and accuracy of what he had written.

More important, however, is the second point. To emphasize the exceptional significance of the treaties, which were in fact concluded in Mecca, they are reported to have been suspended in the Ka'bah "to remind them [i.e. the people concerned] of their obligations." Since there were no archives in ancient Arab times, such documents were usually stored in the homes of the parties involved or personally carried them with them. [4] We often hear about documents being kept in scabbards after the death of their owner, they were handed down in the family.³⁴⁸

We hear only of particularly important documents and deeds that they either suspended or deposited in the Ka'bah.³⁴⁹ From the early ʿAbbāsids we have a corresponding report: al-Masʿūdī³⁵⁰ writes that Ḥārūn ar-Raʿī

(c. 170–193/786–809) deposited the contract he drew up between his sons al-Amin and al-Ma'mun in the Ka'bah (*ḥawḍa-hi l-k'bah*).

Depositing documents and other important pieces of writing in special places (temples, archives, or libraries)—or at least the reference to archives and such as the (alleged) place of custody of documents in order to confirm their existence or to establish reports about their contents as believable—was widely practised in antiquity, both in the Orient and the Occident.³⁵¹ Thus, we hear that legal documents were placed in Egyptian temples and later in the libraries of Coptic monasteries.³⁵² In I Samuel 10: 25, we read: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord." Of Heraklitus, we are told that he deposited a book consisting of three *logoi* (lectures) in the temple of a god.³⁵³ Tacitus reports the following about Caesar and Brutus: "*fecerunt enim et carmina et in Byblithoeas rethulerunt*" ("for they composed [lit. made] odes and they were stored in the libraries"; *Dial.* XXI: 6).³⁵⁴

[5] The purpose of this exercise is obvious: apart from the added weight derived from its location, its main aim in ancient times was to make available an authentic original, which could be checked at any time and by anybody, was permanent, and could possibly be reproduced. Thus, we are dealing with a form of publication or at least "a sort of anticipation of publication."³⁵⁵

Since writing can be used to record facts permanently and disseminate them, an Arab could, during the *ḡāhiliyyah* (the period before Islam) and in early Islam, threaten to "preserve" in writing a (true or alleged) outrage committed against him by an opponent, perhaps in the form of a "billposter." The accused must, then, have feared that his name and that of his family would be associated with the said outrage permanently and everywhere. In the *Ṣirah* (*Prophetic Biography*),³⁵⁶ Abū Ḡāhl tells al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib:

If what she [sc. your sister 'Ātikah] says is true, so be it... but if nothing of it is, we will write a document (*kitāban*) against you (to the effect) that you are the greatest liars of the people of the shrine [i.e. the Meccans] among the Arabs.³⁵⁷

In (official) epistles and letters of protection, the function of writing was very often similar to that in contracts. Thus, letters written by the Prophet to Arab tribes were "documents issued for them by M[uḥammad]; (they) contain the conditions, under which... [6] they were admitted [sc. into the Islamic community]."³⁵⁸

The Prophet does not seem to have kept an archive.³⁵⁹ Apparently, these documents were preserved among favored families.³⁶⁰

The official letters of the Prophet are typologically close to the legal provisions on blood money (*dīyah*, *māqil*) he issued to supplement the scant Qur'anic material on the subject. According to tradition, which is unanimous in this respect, he recorded them in writing (or had them written down). Aṭ-Ṭabarī reports³⁶¹: "In this year [sc. 2/623–624], the Messenger of God wrote down... the provisions on blood money (*katāba l-māqil*)."

Another tradition refers to the Prophet recording the provisions on a shahd (*ṣahīfah*).³⁶² Goldzher has already considered these provisions to be the oldest probably authentic "elements of legal *Ḥadīṭ*" and observed that, contrary to other *Ḥadīṭ* material, their written transmission did not meet any resistance "because their authenticity was generally accepted."³⁶³ In the following sentence, at-Ṭabarī also tells us *how* these legal provisions were kept: "and they were attached to a sword."³⁶⁴

In private letters,³⁶⁵ which are also well attested for the early Islamic era, writing had a slightly different function. It allowed the transmission of a message over distance without the messenger (or other people) necessarily knowing about contents.³⁶⁶

II

[7] Ancient Arabic poetry was, like tribal tradition (*qayyām al-ʿarab*, "the battle days of the Arabs"; *ṣaḥārah*, reports), genealogies (*ʿansāb*), and proverbs (*ʿamāl*) originally only intended for oral recitation and oral dissemination. Oral recitation was its mode of publication. Thus, the publication of poetry took quite a different form from that of contracts. Even after the poems had been collected in written compilations, oral recitation remained for a long time the proper procedure for publication of poetry. During the lifetime of the poet, he himself or his *rāwī* (transmitter) recited the poems.³⁶⁷ After the poet's death, his *rāwī* was exclusively responsible for the recitation and dissemination of his poems. With the death of the *rāwī*, "wider circles, at first from the poet's own tribe,"³⁶⁸ took it on themselves to learn his collection of poems. While we often have sufficient information about the *rāwāt* (transmitters) of famous poets and even know them by name, this latter stage in the transmission of a collection of (or isolated) poems is much less well attested. The situation becomes clearer again only with the appearance of the "learned *rāwāʾ*" (*rāwīyāt*)³⁶⁹ such as Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' (d. c. 1/700–771 or 157/773–774), Ḥammād ar-Rāwiyah (d. c. 156/773), Ḥalaf al-Ahmar (d. c. 180/796), and al-Mufaḍḍal ad-Dabbī (d. c. 164/780). Motivated by an "academic" interest in poetry, they excelled at collecting large compilations of material covering several tribes.

According to the scant information we have about the intermediate period of transmission between *rāwāt* and *rāwīyāt*, the latter received poems and reports about ancient times from the following sources: "bedouins" (*ʿaṣāb*), especially tribal elders (*ʿaṣyāb*)—apparently people who played an important role in preserving and transmitting the traditional material of their tribes³⁷¹—and other members of the poet's tribe, among them also women, as well as from transmitter-poets such as Dū 'r-Rummaḥ (d. 117/735) [8], Ḡarīr (d. c. 111/729), and al-Faraz (d. c. 110/728),³⁷² in particular, and also their children and grandchildren (example, Ḡarīr's grandson is mentioned).³⁷³

Early on, the preservation of poetry was thought to involve not only the collection and preservation of the quality of the transmitted material, but also, where possible,

its improvement. Shortly before his death, al-Huṣay'ah (d. around the middle of the second/seventh century), himself a famous *rāwī*,³⁷⁴ is said to have exclaimed: "Woe be to poetry which falls into the hands of a bad *rāwī*!" (*wayl li-š-š'r min rāwīyat as-š'ir*).³⁷⁵

Once, Ḥalaf al-Aḥmar told his student al-Asma'ī (d. 213/828).³⁷⁶ "In the past, transmitters were wont to improve the poems of the ancients." In fact, we have more evidence for such interventions since early Islamic times. Ibn Muqbil (d. after 35/656 or 70/690) is reported to have said:³⁷⁷ "I let the verses go crooked and bent. Then the transmitters bring them back straightened" (*ʿimī la-ʿurīlu l-buyū ʿuḡan fa-larī l-r-rwāt bi-hā qad ʿaḡamat-hā*).

Ġarīr and al-Farazdaq let their *rwāt* polish (review) their poems. In the course of a longer narrative in the *Kiāb al-ʿaḡānī*,³⁷⁸ reported by Abū 'l-Faraḡ on the authority of an uncle of al-Farazdaq, we find the following information about the work of the *rwāt* of these two famous poets of the Umayyad age:

I came to al-Farazdaq . . . I entered (the house of) his transmitters and met them while they were straightening out (*yraḍḍilūn*) what was crooked in his poetry (*mā ʿnḡaraḡa min š'rī-hī*) . . . I then came to Ġarīr . . . I found his transmitters in the process of putting aright (*yugawwimūn*) what was crooked in his poems and (of correcting the rhymes) which contained the fault named *sinād*.³⁷⁹

[9] One of the interesting details contained in this story is the fact that the things which the transmitters were supposed to correct also included faults in the rhyme scheme.

During the conversation mentioned above, Ḥalaf al-Aḥmar is said to have told al-Asma'ī to correct a verse by Ġarīr, even though it was perfectly clear that Ġarīr had composed in this form and even though al-Asma'ī had read this verse in this very form before Abū 'Amr—because Ġarīr, according to Ḥalaf, did not refine his poetry enough and was careless with his expressions.³⁸⁰ In this case, the verse was improved by replacing one preposition with another. Originally, Ġarīr is reported to have said:

O what a day to be remembered the good fortune of which *appeared before* its misfortune/when the slanderer was far and the carper idle.
fa-yā la-ka yawman ḡayru-hū qabla š'arī-hī/laḡayyaba wašī-hī wa-aḡsara ʿadīlu-h.

Ḥalaf is said to have substituted *qabla* with *dūna* because it improved the meaning:

O what a day to be remembered the good fortune of which was *without* its misfortune . . .
fa-yā la-ka yawman ḡayru-hū dūna š'arī-hī.

In a report traced back to al-Māzin (d. 248/862), we are told that al-Asm himself improved a verse by Imru' al-Qays: he replaced an expression considered unsuitable in the verse's context with a more suitable one. Sometimes transmitters also corrected mistakes in the *ʿarabīyah* (pure Arabic).³⁸¹

The arbitrary practices of the transmitters are aptly summed up in this saying *ar-rāwīyah ʿahād aš-š'irayn*, "the transmitter is a poet."³⁸²

Thus, *rwāt* (transmitters) of this period placed their emphasis not so much textual accuracy and the faithful transmission of the original, but the preservati indeed the improvement of a poem's artistic and linguistic quality. The idea a written redaction, that is, a literary publication of the material, is incompatible with this concept of transmission. One form (or at least an anticipation) of wri publication was the deposition of contracts discussed above. In the case of poet however, the publication was still very closely connected to personal [10] a oral—"heard" or "audited"—transmission and dissemination. While the form procedure was meant to determine a text's wording and preserve it unambiguou and perdurably, the latter was intended to retain flexibility: what was good in a t should be kept and what was not yet mature or unfinished should *not* be preserv Thus, it was to remain open for future improvement. Only a competent person rather than any well written piece of writing—could guarantee this process.

Yet, the circumstances described above do not at all exclude the use of writing the process of transmission. In fact, we have numerous testimonies from this per which show that poets and *rwāt* possessed written notes and even substan collections. These notes, however, were not intended to be disseminated to public; their main purpose was to serve as an aide-mémoire for the transmitt Thus, writing fulfilled a completely different function than it had in the recording contracts and letters of protection. In the latter case, it served a basic, fundamen purpose; in the former, its function was largely auxiliary.

In one of his polemical poems (*muḡāʿid*, "poetic flytings"),³⁸³ al-Farazdaq l numerous earlier poets whose works he transmits. In this context, he says:³⁸⁴

Of al-Ġaʿfān [= Labīd] and the earlier Bišr (ibn Abī Ḥāzim), I possess the written compilation of their poems.
wa-l-Ġaʿfān wa-kāna Bišrun qabla-hū / lī min qaṣāʾidī-hī l-kiābu l-m mālu.

A few verses later, he says:³⁸⁵

They left me their book as an inheritance . . .
dayfaʿu ʿilayya kiāba-humū wašṭaytan

These verses tell us that al-Farazdaq owned notebooks containing the poet he transmitted: he explicitly mentions that he possessed the "book" of Labī and Bišr's "compiled" poems. This means that these poets themselves and

ruwāt (at least) one generation before al-Farazdaq must have produced records; otherwise, he could not claim to have inherited their notebooks as a legacy.

[11] Al-Farazdaq's *rāwī* Ibn Mattawayhi is explicitly reported to have written down the poems of his master.³⁸⁶ When he wanted to compose a lampoon on the Banū Numayr, Ġarīr told his transmitter Ḥusayn: "Put more oil into the lamp today and prepare tablets and ink!"³⁸⁷

Already at this stage, we can document the existence of "books" with tribal lore and such. As al-Mufaḍḍal ad-Dabbi reports on the authority of Abū 'Ubaydah,³⁸⁸ we have the following verse by al-Tirmīdhī (d. c. 110/728)—and not, as is sometimes assumed, by Bishr ibn Abī Ḥāzim (d. after 600)³⁸⁹—which mentions a *Kitāb Banī Tamīm*:

In the Book of the Banū Tamīm, we found: "The borrowed horse is the best one for the race"
(*wagādhā fī kitābi banī Tamīmīn / 'ahāqu 'hāyilī bi- 'r-rakkī 'l-murārī*).

This quotation from the *Kitāb Banī Tamīm* apparently records a proverb or saying (*maṭāl*).

During this time, just as the writing down of *ḥadīṭ* material became predominant in practice while in theory it was fiercely attacked by scholars, especially those from Basrah and Kūfah,³⁹⁰ so too, the use of writing for the recording of poetry also met with criticism. Significantly, it was aimed above all at one poet who still represented the bedouin tradition: Dū 'r-Rummah (d. 117/735).

In al-Marzubān's *Kitāb al-muwašṣah* (*The Adorned*),³⁹¹ we find a set of three anecdotes describing how Dū 'r-Rummah either dictated his poems to three scholars and transmitters, namely Šu'bah ibn al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ (d. 160/776), Ḥammād ar-Rāwiyah (d. c. 156/773), and Ḥisā 'bn 'Umar at-Taḡafī (d. 149/766) or had them "read out before" him—during which, naturally enough, the scholars used written records. In the course of this exercise, the poet is said to have instructed them on graphical matters and pointed out mistakes in their notes. Asked by the surprised scholars whether he could write, Dū 'r-Rummah explained that a "settled" scribe—according to one version of the story, he hailed from al-Ḥīrah—visited him in the desert and taught him to write by drawing the letters in [112] the sand. Two versions record that the poet asked the scholar not to tell anybody about his literacy.

Thanks to a statement by a literary theorist, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Ġaṭṭār al-Kalā'ī (fl. c. 542/1148),³⁹² we also know *why* the use of writing by Bedouin poets was frowned upon:

In their [sc. a group of scholars'] opinion, artificiality (*takalluf*) is to be rejected, and therefore, they had doubts about the purity of the language (*faṣāḥah*) of a poet who wrote. They feared that he would be unnatural and affected by using the pen and have recourse to his sense of sight for

(poetic) speech, since (when a poet writes) those two [sc. pen and sense of sight] are part of the work and play a role in (the process of) composition.

According to this point of view, writing is not needed as a support by someone endowed with natural poetic talent. Poets working with pen and paper were considered to be "unnatural," "affected," and regarded by certain scholars as less talented than those who eschewed these tools.

Even such a negative example demonstrates how widespread the use of writing as a mnemonic aid was with poets and *ruwāt* of the early second/eighth century. In addition, al-Marzubān's anecdotes give us some insight into the methods the learned *ruwāt*, who at this time began to collect poetry on a large scale, then recorded (in writing) poems and "read" them out "before" the poets or transmitters (*qirā'ah*). Their records, which they kept at home and consulted when needed, have nothing to do with "publications." In line with ancient Arab custom, poetic recitation, which now developed into public scholarly lectures,³⁹³ remained or similar to the *ḥadīṭ* scholars teaching in Basrah and Kūfah, Baṣṭrian and Kūfī philologists (Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā', Ḥammād ar-Rāwiyah, Ḥalaf al-Aḥmar, al-Mufaḍḍal ad-Dabbi) recited their material from memory. The *rāwīyāt* did not leave any writings they themselves had edited.

In his article on Ḥammād ar-Rāwiyah, Ibn an-Nadīm³⁹⁴ explicitly notes that nobody had ever seen a book by him: "books" circulating under his name were edited by later scholars. Ḥammād of course also possessed written records, but only used them for private purposes. According to a report in the *Kitāb al-aghāṭī* (*The Book of Songs*) [13] transmitted on the authority of Ḥammād himself, he was once summoned by the caliph al-Walīd ibn Yazīd (r. 125–126/734–735). Before meeting him, Ḥammād read up on what the caliph would most likely question him about. He is said to have reasoned:

I said (to myself): "He is surely going to ask me only about his ancestors on his mother's and his father's side, the Qurayš and the Taḡfī." I therefore consulted the books Qurayš and Taḡfī. But when I joined him, he asked me for the poems of the Bal'.³⁹⁵

It seems, from the anecdote, that Ḥammād—and probably also other *rāwīyān*—arranged their collections according to tribes. This confirms the claims Goldziher³⁹⁶ and Bräun,³⁹⁷ who argued that tribal *dīwāns* (collected poems) were the original form of poetical collections and preceded the *dīwāns* of individual poets. The written records in question should not, however, be equated with tribal *dīwāns* redacted by the philologists of the following (the third/ninth) century. They are at most precursors to these later compilations. In all likelihood, they were not even collections of poems alone, but probably also contained tribal tradition proverbs, and whatever else was considered worth knowing. The quotation from the *Kitāb Banī Tamīm* mentioned above³⁹⁸ is manifestly a proverb.

We should also note that, in his private audience with the caliph, Ḥammād did what he usually did in his public recitations: he left his books at home. He did not need the support of writing—or, at least, he wanted to give that impression.

In a dirge, Abū Nuwās (d. c.200/815) praised his teacher Ḥalaf al-Aḥmar, a student of Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' and himself a famous *rāwīyah*, with the following words:³⁹⁹

he was accustomed not to make the meaning of the words obscure and not to recite from notebooks [or: not to rely on notebooks] (*wa-lā yurammī ma'nā 'l-kalāmi wa-lā yakūnu 'inšādu-hū* [or: *'inšādu-hū*] *an aṣ-ṣuḥufi*).

Al-Ġāhiz reports⁴⁰⁰ on the authority of Abū 'Ubaydah (d. 207/822 or slightly later) that Abū 'Amr had enough notebooks to fill one of his rooms almost to the roof. Even if he, as this report adds, had not destroyed them at a later date, [14] these records would not have reached posterity: they were "books" he had recorded from "bedouins of pure speech," that is, "lecture" notes for his private use. They were not edited books intended for publication. In line with contemporary practice, Abū 'Amr had received his knowledge by way of *samā'* ("audited" transmission).⁴⁰¹ Like *Ḥadīṭ* scholars, Basrian and Kūfian philologists retained the practice of reciting their material orally and, whenever possible, from memory, until the third/ninth century.

According to his student 'Ta'yāb (d. 291/904),⁴⁰² Ibn al-A'rābi (d. 231/846) held his lectures for years without any written notes. Still, a revealing anecdote⁴⁰³ tells us that he kept numerous "books" at home: on one occasion, Ibn al-A'rābi is said to have claimed that a number of bedouins (before whom he "heard") were at his home. However, it turned out that not a single bedouin had shown up at his home; rather, he had been consulting the "books" he kept there! The anecdote throws into sharp relief the discrepancy between ideal and reality or between theory and practice of instruction in philology (and other subjects), which came to the fore at this time (but which had existed earlier): impelled by general expectation, scholars pretended to have received their entire knowledge through "heard"/"audited" transmission.⁴⁰⁴ In personal contact with their teachers. In fact, much, perhaps even most of it was copied from "books" already circulating or available at the time. As with some circles of *Ḥadīṭ* scholars,⁴⁰⁵ recitation from memory was practised henceforth as a matter of "sport," not in earnest anymore: free recitation had been identified as a source of inaccuracies and flaws in transmission long before.⁴⁰⁶

In the beginning and for a long time after, Arab poets and their *rāwī* did not consider putting their collections into a final form and publishing them. The same can be said of the learned *rāwī* who, even though some of them were non-Arabs, still regarded themselves as following the ancient Arab tradition. The idea of writing down a text for "public" use emerged outside this circle.

[15] Of the Umayyad caliph Mu'āwiyah (r. 41–60/661–680), we hear that he ordered *rāwī* to select poems and "transmit" them to his son Yazīd. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705) is reported to have chosen one *qaṣīdah* (polythematic poem)

each from the works of the seven famous ancient Arab poets—a precursor to the *Muṣallaghāt* collection purportedly compiled by Ḥammād at-Rāwīyah.⁴⁰⁷

Even though it is not explicitly stated that the recording of the collections in question was in writing, it is very likely: the commission came from the caliph who maintained a library. However, in this as in other cases, reliable information can only be found in the early 'Abbasid era and later.⁴⁰⁸

According to a report quoted in Ibn an-Nadīm's *Fihrist* (*The Index or Catalogue*),⁴⁰⁹ one of the major *rāwīyah*, al-Muḥaddal ad-Dabbī, "produced" (*'amila logue*), the collection later known by his name as *al-Muḥaddalīyah* for the son of al-Mansūr, later the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–785). It is clear that, at least on account of their length, these poems were put into writing. In addition, the term *'amila* "produce," in connection with *al-muharrarah*, "the collection," also points to written text.

Another report⁴¹⁰ tells a different story about the origin of the collection: the 'Alid Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd Allāh is said to have chosen and compiled these poems in al-Muḥaddal's house from "two repositories full of (books containing) poems and reports (*qimṭarayn fi-hā 'aṣṣūr wa-'alḡār*). Al-Muḥaddal himself did not produce a conclusively edited text of his collection. Ibn an-Nadīm writes:⁴¹¹

It consists of 128 *qaṣīdahs*, but sometimes there are more and sometimes fewer; sometimes the *qaṣīdahs* are arranged before and sometimes after according to the (respective) transmission from him. The correct one, however, is that which Ibn al-A'rābi transmitted from him.

Furthermore, it was the caliph al-Mansūr (r. 136–158/754–775) who commissioned Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) to produce a written version of his entire historical material, also (as in the case of the *Muḥaddalīyah*) for the crown prince. The "great book" (*al-Kiṭāb al-kabīr*) Ibn Ishāq subsequently wrote [16] was then included the caliphal library (*'alḡā 'l-Kiṭāb al-kabīr fī ḡazānah*).⁴¹²

Even in this case, there is no question of the emergence of a fixed text transmitted further in a stable, standardized form. Rather, Ibn Ishāq's historical material particularly his *Kiṭāb al-maḡāzī* (*The Book of Campaigns*), was passed on to various redactors (Ibn Hišām, at-Ṭabarī, etc.) via numerous students of Ibn Ishāq and their own students through the medium of lectures. The parallel transmission, which are now available in the extant recensions sometimes differ substantially.⁴¹³ The finished edition produced for the caliphal library seems to have disappeared; we hear nothing more about it.

The term "publication" is not entirely appropriate for those two works—*Muḥaddalīyah* and *al-Kiṭāb al-kabīr*—because the "public" they addressed was extremely restricted (the caliph and his court). Nevertheless, we can at least speak of an "anticipation" of publication insofar as the scholars prepared edited versions of their collections or scripts available for use by strangers.

Soon afterwards, we encounter—still only very sporadically—another "anticipation" of publication in philological circles, namely the deposition of mo-

copies (cf. p. 63). Significantly, it is first attested in reports about a scholar who, in the context of another of his works, his dictionary *Kitāb al-ġim* (*The Book of [the Letter] Ġim*), is said to have been very "stingy" with its transmission, that is, not overly interested in teaching it to his students in his lectures: Abū 'Amr aṣ-Ṣaybānī (d. c.205/820).⁴¹⁴

According to a report⁴¹⁵ traced back to his son 'Amr, aṣ-Ṣaybānī used to deposit in the Kūfah mosque a copy of each of the volumes of his tribal *dīwāns* (the final count is said to have come to 80) upon completion. Obviously, a written edition had been undertaken which the author intended to be final.

III

[17] One of the first scholars writing in Arabic to compose a book with a fixed text, which was on the one hand to be disseminated whenever possible through the lecture system, but on the other did not depend any more on oral or "heard"/"audited" transmission on account of its edited form, was the grammarian Ṣibawayhi (d. c.180/796).⁴¹⁶ He created something unprecedented by charting an entire system, that of Arabic grammar. This might be one reason why he chose the form of the literary book (divided into chapters and so on) to present his ideas. At the same time, other writings could have served as models for his text, for example, the (conclusively edited) books written by secretaries (*kuttāb*) working in the Iranian tradition: Ibn al-Muqaffā' (d. c.139/756-757), for example. Obviously, the Qur'ān could have been another such model: the conclusively edited form of his book reminded Arab scholars of the *Kitāb Allāh* (*The Book of Allāh*) and they named Ṣibawayhi's *Kitāb* ('*The Book*') the *Qur'ān an-naḥw*, "the Qur'ān of grammar."⁴¹⁷

To appreciate Ṣibawayhi's achievement adequately, we have to place it in the context of the scientific work and output of his contemporary grammarians. The Kūfian al-Farrā' (d. 207/822) is the "author" of a *Kitāb ma'nānī l-Qur'ān* (*The Topics of the Qur'ān*). It could be considered something of a Kūfian counterpart to Ṣibawayhi's *Kitāb* ('*The Book*') due to its treatment of numerous grammatical issues in the context of a Qur'ān commentary. Al-Farrā' "dictated it from memory, without written notes, in his lecture courses" (*amlaḥu... 'an ḥifẓi-hi min ḡayr muṣṭaḥ fī maǧālis-hi*). These courses took place over a period of two years.⁴¹⁸

There are a number of other impulses which induced exponents of the indigenous Arabic sciences to edit conclusively and publish their written records; they belong to different contexts and have to be assessed on a different basis. Three of the most important impulses, all of which have their origin outside the scholarly fields, are as follows:

1 The conflict with sects and heterodox movements. This impulse brought about the earliest extant theological writings, for example, the *Risālah fī l-qadar* (*Epistle on Destiny*), ascribed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728).⁴¹⁹

[18] the anti-qadarite epistle ascribed to 'Umar II (r. 99-101/717-720) (i.e. an epistle directed against the proponents of free will)⁴²⁰, and the *Kitāb al-irḡḡa* (*The Book on the Postponement of Judgement*), said to have been written by al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanāfiyah (d. 99/717).⁴²¹ All of these "books," including the last, are epistles (*rasāʾil*). Thus, they belong to the written tradition of composing documents and letters discussed in the first section of this article. In a preface to the *Kitāb al-irḡḡa* (*The Book on the Postponement of Judgement*), it is said (based on a chain of witnesses) that al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanāfiyah charged one of his confidants with publicly reading out the epistle.⁴²² Obviously, in the late first/seven and early second/eighth century, the oral "publication" of certain documents edited in writing was still considered necessary.

2 The desire of the caliphal and provincial administration to have their policies brought together in writing. This impulse lay behind the first extant "prope book on law to have survived: the *Kitāb a-ḥarāǧ* (*The Book of Land-Tax*) by Abū Yūsuf Ya'qub (d. 182/798).⁴²³ Abū Yūsuf's work, too, takes the form of an epistle: in its introduction, we read that it was addressed to the caliph Ḥarūn ar-Rašīd and produced at his behest.⁴²⁴ Incidentally, the *Fihrist* (*The Index or Catalogue*) refers to it as a *risālah* (epistle).⁴²⁵ The book's immediate predecessor was a book of the same name by the secretary (*kātib*) Ibn Yāsī (d. 170/786).⁴²⁶ This suggests that the *risālah* (epistle) as a literary genre emerged in the milieu of the secretaries working in the state administration. look at the literary output of the first secretary whose [19] writings are extant 'Abd al-Ḥamid ibn Yahyā l-Kātib (d. 132/750)⁴²⁷ confirms this claim: "his works are epistles. The use of the epistolary form by Islamic scholars is a secondary phenomenon: the fully developed form of the scientific *risālah* was modelled on the literary *risālah* of the secretaries."⁴²⁸

3 (often not clearly distinct from point 2.) The desire of the court to have readily available certain material which scholars only disseminated through their lectures (e.g. historical reports, poems, etc.; cf. pp. 70-71 and p. 81).

IV

The evolution of the Qur'ān into a fixed written text—as portrayed by tradition and considered most likely by most European scholars—took place several stages.⁴²⁹ In its basic outlines, it anticipated the process leading to literacy as the dominant medium for the majority of the genuinely Islamic sciences: from notes written as mnemonic aids, it led to systematic collections, and, finally, to edited and "published" book.

Contrary to all other works of Arabic literature, however, this specific book experienced two types of "publication," which, after a time, existed side by side. We have encountered these types already: the deposition of edited master copies on the one hand and oral recitation on the other. Since the originators or exponents of each of these "publication" methods differed and had different interests and

concerns, conflict was unavoidable: on one side of the divide stood the state power, on the other, the "transmitters" of the Qur'ānic text (the so-called Qur'ān readers, *qurrān*).

The prevailing tradition has it that the first revelation to be accorded to the Prophet was *Sūrah* 96: 1–5. The passage starts with a command to recite: [20]

Recite in the name of your Lord . . . (*iqra' bi-smi rabbī-ka*)

Other early *Sūrahs* begin with *qul*, "say" (*Sūrahs* 109, 112, 113, 114). Thus, the Prophet first recited the *Sūrah* or part of it and had it repeated by his audience. This version of events is supported by indigenous tradition.⁴³⁰ There may at first have been no need to write down the short revelations. With the growing number and length of revealed texts, however, things quickly changed: from a relatively early time onwards, perhaps sometime during the middle Meccan period, the Prophet had the revelations recorded in writing.⁴³¹ Tradition explicitly attests to this; it also names the persons the Prophet used to dictate the revelations to.⁴³² We need only mention the most important "scribe of the revelation" (*kātib al-wahy*): Zayd ibn Ṭābit (d. 42/662–663 or some years later). However, it has correctly been remarked that these records only served as mnemonic aids for oral recitation.⁴³³

We do not know when exactly "scripture" became the *objective*—some claim that this process was already complete by the second year before the *Hijrah* (i.e. 620 AD).⁴³⁴ In general, however, the fact that the term *al-qur'ān* (recitation) was more and more replaced by *al-kitāb* (book) as the term for the revelation as a whole⁴³⁵ clearly demonstrates that the ideal of a book such as that possessed by the "People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*) came more and more into focus. This development need not be contradictory: the earlier term *al-qur'ān* with its two meanings "recitation" (infinitive of *qara'a*) and "lectionary" (from the Syriac term *qaryānā*)⁴³⁶ does not exclude the involvement of written records ("recitation"). Rather, it implies them ("lectionary"). While the *objective* or *ideal* of the Qur'ān as a proper book was already entertained during the Prophet's lifetime, [21] it had *in fact* not been fashioned into a collection edited by its "author" at the time of Muḥammad's death. On this point, indigenous tradition and the overwhelming majority of European scholars concur.⁴³⁷ Tradition claims that at the time of the death of the Prophet, there were numerous scattered written records on slips (of papyrus or parchment, called *riqāʿ*), (flat, white) chips of stone (*lithaf*), palm stalks (*ʿasab*), shoulder blades (*ʿakāṭif*), ribs (*ʿadlās*), scraps of leather (*qīṣar ʿaṭīm*), and small slates (*ʿalwāḥ*).⁴³⁸ Some versions add sheets (*ṣuhuf*).⁴³⁹ The reports agree on one detail, however: there was at the time no copy which consisted *entirely* of sheets of the same material and format (*ṣuhuf*): there was no collection "between two book covers" (*bayna ṭi-lawḥayn*).⁴⁴⁰

The extant reports about the first complete compilation or collection of the Qur'ān, undertaken on the order of the first caliph Abū Bakr (r. 11–13/632–634) or his successor 'Umar (r. 13–23/634–644),⁴⁴¹ may contain a substantial amount of legendary and false material. But with F. Schwally⁴⁴² we can probably identify the

following points as their authentic core: the instigator of the collection was either the later caliph 'Umar (r. 634–644) or (as [22] Schwally assumes) 'Umar's daughter Ḥafṣah (?); Zayd ibn Ṭābit, the "scribe of the revelation," was commissioned with its execution; and, finally, the resulting copy was for a long time in the possession of Ḥafṣah and was used as the basis of the first official edition of the text, commissioned by the caliph 'Utmān and again supervised by Zayd ibn Ṭābit. Even though some elements of the tradition suggest otherwise, this first collection cannot have been an official "state" copy⁴⁴³; unanimously, our source report that after 'Umar's death, it was not passed on to his successor but remained in his family. If 'Umar was in fact its originator, the copy seems to have been commissioned for the caliph's private use. Soon, other prominent personalities (e.g. Ubayy ibn Ka'b, 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, and Abū Mūsā al-Aʿẓar) also had their own private copies of the Qur'ān prepared.⁴⁴⁴ Significantly, 'Umar's copy did not purport to contain the authoritative text of the Qur'ān. Consequently, we do not hear about any opposition to its compilation.

Zayd is said to have written the sacred text on *ṣuhuf*, "sheets" of the same material (probably leather) and format⁴⁴⁵ after it had existed in written form only (disparate materials. Conspicuously, this private collection was only rarely referred to as a *mushaf*, a "codex," the label later given to the official collection.⁴⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the earlier copy was already something like a book with a fixed form (or at least a prototype): it was a collection "between two covers" (*bayna ṭi-lawḥayn*).⁴⁴⁷

Since Schwally, however, European scholars have frequently claimed that the reports about the laborious assembly of the first copy of the Qur'ān from most disparate fragments were an exaggeration. They maintained that larger groups *Sūrahs* must already have been available in writing and that the story illustrates [23] the tendency to stress the miraculous character of the collection of the Qur'ān.⁴⁴⁸ However, tradition itself, at least partially, acknowledges the existence of sheets of the same format and material (*ṣuhuf*), most likely denoting connected written records of longer Qur'ānic passages.⁴⁴⁹ Schwally did not know of these reports. Furthermore, there is no reason for us to mistrust tradition on this issue: it would have been much more obvious to connect this extraordinary phenomenon—to the Qur'ān as the first proper Arabic book—with the Prophet himself and to place its collection into his lifetime, particularly as it was generally conceded that the Revelation had been written down during his lifetime by people such as Zayd ibn Ṭābit.

"We have sent down to thee the Book that it be recited to them (*Sūrah* 2: 51)." Verses such as this show that, even after the idea of a written revelation had gained prominence, the original concept of the oral recitation of the sacred text did not fade away or retreat into the background. Book and recitation, written and oral transmission, are but two aspects of one revelation. During the Prophet's lifetime,⁴⁵⁰ the recitation and dissemination of the Qur'ān was carried out by *qurrān* (Qur'ān readers).⁴⁵¹ Their method was the same as that of the *ruwāt*: they recited the sacred texts orally and from memory, and if they were able to re-

and write, they used written records to aid their memory. At some point, several Qur'ān readers, among them Ubayy ibn Ka'b (d. 19/640 or later) and 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652–653 or later), possessed complete copies based on their own collections.⁴⁵²

As far as I am aware, the relation between *qārī* and *rāwī* was noticed and most clearly expressed by E. Beck. He writes:⁴⁵³ "Both recite the words of someone who preceded them: the *rāwī* those of his poet, the *qārī* those of the revelation bestowed on Muḥammad."

Since there was not yet an "official edition," different transmissions arose [24] and people began to argue about the "true form" of the Qur'ānic text.⁴⁵⁴ According to Islamic tradition, such disputes had already emerged during the Prophet's lifetime.⁴⁵⁵ After his death, there was at first no authority to decide such matters. In the transmission of ancient Arabic poetry, the varying and flexible character of a poem's text was not only tolerated but was normal and sometimes even welcomed. In the case of the revealed word of God, such flexibility after a certain time must necessarily have been scandalous. Disputes about the correct text of the sacred book such as those which surfaced at this time could become a threat to the very unity of Islam. For this reason, the caliph 'Utmān, on the advice of one of his most famous military leaders, Ḥudayfah, decided to commission an official edition of the Qur'ānic text.⁴⁵⁶

Our sources unanimously report that Zayd ibn Ṭābit was again entrusted with this delicate task, this time assisted by a group of prominent Qurāshites. The prevailing tradition has it that Zayd could base his work on his earlier collection (*ṣuḥuf*), which was still in the possession of Ḥaṣṣah. According to an isolated report, disparate materials (small slates, shoulder blades, and palm stalks) "containing the Book" (*fi-hi l-kitāb*), were once again brought together from all regions and included in the preparation of the edition.⁴⁵⁷

The official, authoritative character of 'Utmān's edition was enforced by sending copies of the text to the *amṣār*, the provincial capitals, where they were deposited to serve as authoritative versions of the texts while other collections were, wherever possible, to be destroyed.⁴⁵⁸ Thus, the Qur'ān had become in reality what it had theoretically and ideally already been in the Prophet's lifetime: a book with a (virtually) fixed form, a *muṣḥaf* (codex). In addition, it had, at least according to the intention of the authorities, become a "published" book with a text binding on everyone. Its publication consisted of the sending of the master copies to and deposition of them in the provincial capitals. This is the very same form of publication attested in pre-Islamic times for important contracts and treaties.

"With this act, the main emphasis of Qur'ānic transmission was shifted towards the written book."⁴⁵⁹ From now on, poetry and the Qur'ān [25] also differed in this key respect: while for the former, the free "oral" dissemination and publication was continued, a uniform, edited text had become the basis of transmission for the latter. This development can be interpreted in a positive light: in one pre-'Utmān tradition, we read,⁴⁶⁰ "If 'Utmān had not ordered the Qur'ān to be written down, people [while they were in fact reciting the Qur'ān] would have been found

engaging in reciting poetry." That is, people would have treated the text of the Qur'ān as freely as poets and *rwāṭ* (transmitters) customarily did with their texts.

On the other side, there were the Qur'ān readers who had always practised their other form of "publication": oral recitation. Their system which, as we have seen was equivalent to that of the *rwāṭ*, was disrupted by the official edition of the Qur'ānic text. Their opposition is clearly visible in the charge later leveled against 'Utmān by numerous rebels⁴⁶¹: "The Qur'ān was (many) books (*kuṭub*); you have discarded them except for one." The Qur'ān readers and their supporters were fact not prepared to accept 'Utmān's collection, which they regarded as one among many, as the ultimate authority. For a short time, one of them even managed gain a certain degree of recognition for "his" Qur'ān in one place: Ibn Mas'ūd Kūfah.⁴⁶²

Just as the *rwāṭ* had come to see substantial freedom in the transmission poetical texts as a natural and desirable prerogative,⁴⁶³ so some pre-'Utmān Qur'ān readers considered the *rwāṭ* *bi-l-maṣnā* (transmission "only" of the sense of the text) sufficient. For example, they regarded it as permissible to replace words with synonyms and change the word order. One of them was Anas ibn Māl, a Companion of the Prophet. He is said to have recited *ṣawḥu* (more accurate instead of *ṣawḥu* (straighter) in *Sūrah* 73: 6, justifying himself by saying that *ṣawḥu* (straighter), *ṣawḥu* (more accurate) and *ṣawḥu* (more appropriate) meant the same thing.⁴⁶⁴ Thus, disputes between Qur'ān readers about the correct recitation of the text of the sacred book were a precedent for the later discussion among traditionists as to whether the reproduction of a tradition's meaning was sufficient or whether it had to be transmitted verbatim (*riwāṭ* *bi-l-lafẓ*).⁴⁶⁵

[26] After the collection and dissemination of the 'Utmānic codex, the "great freedom... the *qārī* enjoyed in respect to the Qur'ān text during the pre-'Utmān period" came to an end.⁴⁶⁶ The shackle that restricted this freedom was the new (virtually) fixed consonantal text of the 'Utmānic *muṣḥaf* (codex). Yet, the Qur'ān readers still had enough to do: the Qur'ān had to remain the (orally) recited word of God. In addition, "a few remaining vestiges" of the great freedom they enjoy before the official edition lingered for a time⁴⁶⁷: the consonantal text allowed different punctuations and vocalizations; the master copies sent out by 'Utmān contained certain variants⁴⁶⁸; and finally, the consonantal text included dialectal forms—whether they could be emended according to the rules of the *ṣawḥu* (pure Arabic) provided food for thought.⁴⁶⁹

The seven famous Qur'ān readers belonged partially to the generation of the scholarly *rwāṭ* of poetry. One scholar, Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā', even belonged to both groups. "Therefore, it is not surprising that in both fields, the motivations and aspirations were the same."⁴⁷⁰ Just as the *rwāṭ* considered it their prerogative only to preserve but, where possible, actually to improve the transmitted poetical text, so Qur'ān readers in the period up to c.132/750 reserved the right in their own recitation to follow their own linguistic competence and not the dead letter especially when confronted with dialectal forms in the 'Utmānic consonantal text. The Kūfān grammarian al-Farrā' reports that Abū 'Amr read in *Sūrah* 20: 66 ((

wa-ima hādāyini ("indeed these two") instead of *wa-ima hādāmi* ("indeed these two") (as found in the codex); on the basis of his knowledge of the *ʿarabīyah* (pure Arabic), he considered the latter un-Arabic and justified his conduct with a tradition traced back to a Companion of the Prophet which ran: "In the *mushaf*, there is *lahn* (dialectal expressions), but the Arabs will put it in order."⁴⁷²

As we know, subsequent developments⁴⁷³ show, on the one hand, an ever-growing fixation on the codex and, on the other, the victory of the principle of tradition: [27] the power of tradition in the end sanctioned the arbitrary decisions of individual readers: the readings of the seven Qurʾān readers mentioned above became *sunnaḥ* (authorized practice or procedure). By the fourth/tenth century at the latest, the time of "creative" readings was over. How to read the text was entirely determined by the respective reading traditions people were affiliated to.

V

When did *qirāʾah* (i.e. here: "Qurʾān reading in a narrow sense . . . insofar as it already presupposed an authoritative consonantal text")⁴⁷⁴ emerge as a genre of scientific writing? When was this science first recorded in literary works? This question has recently occasioned some controversy. In what follows, we will comment on this problem. Before going into detail, however, we want to stress that the problem had already been solved in principle by Bergsträsser, Pretzl, and Beck and that we shall be compelled to return to their explanations.

As a starting point, we need to remember the following: "primarily, we have to do with an oral tradition, which was put into writing only at a later stage."⁴⁷⁵ This clearly makes the most sense: the Qurʾānic text was read out during lectures, and the teacher explained certain problematic passages. It is perfectly conceivable that, from the very beginning, students took written notes of their teacher's comments. Bergsträsser and Pretzl, however, established that

the first written records of this kind [attested in our sources] . . . date from before the middle of the 2nd/8th century, the time of the younger canonical Qurʾān readers and that of the older students of the older canonical Qurʾān readers.⁴⁷⁶

The two scholars collected numerous passages from Ibn al-Ġazālī's *Ṭabaqāt* (*Classes*) and other writings which contain information about Qurʾān readers of the generation of al-Aʿmaš (d. 148/765), Ḥamzah (d. 156/772–773), Nāfiʿ (d. c. 169/785), Abū ʿAmr (d. 154/770–771 or 157/774), and others: we frequently read *la-hū* [the student] *ʿan-hu* [the teacher, e.g. al-Aʿmaš, Ḥamzah, etc.] *muṣṭaḥ*, "he [sc. the student in question] took notes from him [sc. the teacher]". Less frequently, we find *katāba ʿl-qirāʾah* *ʿan . . .*, "he wrote down the reading from . . ." or, in one case, *qarʾahu ʿalā Najf qirāʾata-hū . . . wa-katābahu-hā fī kitābi*, "I read out before [28] Nāfiʿ his Qurʾān reading . . . and wrote it down in my book."⁴⁷⁷

From this evidence, Bergsträsser and Pretzl drew the necessary conclusion that these *musaf* and *katub* were not yet published literary books but purely private records, "lecture notes of a kind" and thus "not, strictly speaking, a *literature* about Qurʾān readings, but its precursor." They maintain that these records contained "only short notes about how the Imām in question read a problematic passage."

A number of writings contemporary with these *musaf* and circulating under the title *Kitāb al-qirāʾi* (*The Book of Qurʾān Readings*) by scholars such as Abū ʿAmr, Ḥalaf Ibn Hišām (d. 229/843) and al-Kisāʾī (d. 189/804–805) are, according to Bergsträsser and Pretzl, of the same type. They claim that writings with titles such as *Ḥillat Najf wa-Ḥamzah* (*The Disagreement between [the Readings of] Najf and Hamzah*) developed out of this type of notebooks. Following al-Ġazālī, they list Abū ʿUbayd (d. 224/838–839) and Abū Ḥātim as-Siḡistānī (d. 255/869) as the earliest authors of compilations which drew on a larger number of authorities.⁴⁷⁸

Thus, we are dealing with a parallel development to *Ḥadīṭ*, philology, and many other Islamic sciences.⁴⁷⁹ As with other sciences, in Qurʾān reading, the "proper" book (*syngamma*), which nevertheless was still to be "published" whenever possible in lecture courses, is preceded by private records prepared as mnemonic aids (*hypomnēmata*). Abū ʿUbayd compiled the first "standard work" in this field, too.⁴⁸⁰ Its textual form was editorially finished, and thus stable enough that in practice, it could also be disseminated by manual copying. In theory, however, it was still to be read out before its author.

In the first chapter of the first volume of his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*,⁴⁸¹ F. Sezgin speculates that it could be possible "to reconstruct some treatises on Qurʾān reading from the 1st century AH" and thereby "gain a clear picture of the beginnings of this genre." To that end, in his subsequent presentation,⁴⁸² he interprets everything the sources label as *Kitāb al-qirāʾah* (*The Book of the Qurʾān Reading*), *Kitāb ḥillat* . . . (*The Book of the Disagreement . . .*), *Kitāb ḥillat Qurʾān Reading*, *Kitāb ḥillat* . . . (*The Book of the Disagreement . . .*), and so on as *bayna . . . wa- . . .* (*The Book of the Divergence between . . . and . . .*), and so on as treatise and proper book (in the sense of *syngamma*)—including [29] "books" (*hypomnēmata*) which appeared in the first one and a half centuries. According to what we have said above, however, proper books and treatises did not yet exist in this time. In the rest of the *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, the distinction between *hypomnēma* and *syngamma*,⁴⁸³ already clearly perceived by nineteenth century scholars such as Sprenger and Goldziher,⁴⁸⁴ is for the most part not fully recognized and consequently not sufficiently taken into account. Part of the blame for the ensuing confusion has to rest with the Arabic terminology, which calls everything written a *kitāb*, whether it be scattered notes or edited books.⁴⁸⁵ (For each item in the *Fihrist* [*The Index or Catalogue*], it is therefore necessary to verify what sort of writing hides behind the term *kitāb*.) The absence of the distinction between *syngamma* and *hypomnēma* is a serious flaw which affects the whole of the *Geschichte*. It is a basic decision of an author of a "Historical Study of Arabic Writing" whether he confines himself to analyzing proper books or whether he includes in his work loose records intended as mnemonic aids about which we

often only have information in the biographical literature. Of course, the author is entitled to make that fundamental decision in favor of the latter. But he has to make a reasoned decision on this issue and inform his readers about the grounds on which he took it. Admittedly, the line between *syngamma* and *hypomnema* cannot always be drawn with certainty in Arabic literature: sometimes, lecture notes and so on were transmitted in spite of their private nature and the transmission "stabilized" at some point, so that these notebooks are available to us today as quasi-literary works.⁴⁸⁶

In an excursus "On the Issue of Literacy" in his manuscript catalogue *Materiahen zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, R. Sellheim pointed out this fundamental mistake which Sezgin commits.⁴⁸⁷ [30] Following Bergsträsser and Pretzl, he correctly observed that there was no *literature* on Qur'ān reading around the end of the first/seventh and in the second/eighth century.⁴⁸⁸ It is also the case that at this time, the phrase *ḥadāḥ ḥiḥ-qirāḥ an-hu*, "he took the reading from him," did not mean that the student read out a treatise on Qur'ān reading to his teacher (this, however, is something Sezgin did not explicitly claim), but that he himself recited the Qur'ān.⁴⁸⁹

On the other hand, reports such as *kāna ḥ-nās yuṣliḥūn muṣḥafūn min ṣalāḥ qirāḥat-hi* [sc. 'Aḥyāh ibn Qays, d. 121/739], "people used to correct their Qur'ān copies according to his [sc. 'Aḥyāh ibn Qays'] reading"⁴⁹⁰ show that very early on, written Qur'ān texts were used in recitations, something Sellheim doubted.⁴⁹¹ In lectures teaching the Qur'ān, written copies obviously functioned as *hypomnemata*, the text of which was corrected and revised through *ṣanāḥ*.

Somewhat later, there appeared people called *muṣḥaffiyyūn* in the field of Qur'ān reading, a group comparable to *ṣuḥūfiyyūn* in other sciences, those who received their knowledge exclusively from notebooks (*ṣuḥūf*) in circulation instead of "heard"/"audited" transmission (*ar-rivāyah al-masni'ah, samāḥ*).⁴⁹² Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī (d. 255/869) among others warns against trusting these people: *lā tarḥūdu ḥiḥ-Qur'ān an al-muṣḥaffiyyīn*, "do not learn the Qur'ān from those who have only read codices!"⁴⁹³ There could not be any better evidence for the fact that also in the field of Qur'ān reading, "merely written" transmission was common practice, if frowned upon.

Again following Bergsträsser and Pretzl, Sellheim correctly describes the *muṣaḥif* (copies) and *ḥatīb* discussed above as "written notes . . . produced for private use" in contrast to the later "genuine works of an author."⁴⁹⁴ He goes too far, however, in suggesting—in line with his general tendency to overestimate the part of purely oral teaching and learning and of memorizing material⁴⁹⁵—that such *muṣaḥif* (copies) were the exception rather than the rule.⁴⁹⁶ To [31] disprove this view, we need only refer to the "large number of examples" (in the words of Bergsträsser and Pretzl), many of which they quote.⁴⁹⁷

An early *ḥatīb fi ḥiḥ-qirāḥat* (*Book on the Qur'ān Readings*) associated with Yahyā ḥn Ya'mar (d. 89/707 or later) and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), however, cannot be listed along with the said *muṣaḥif* and deserves some attention. The fact that it was ascribed to two "authors" already stands out. Sezgin calls it "the oldest

title known to us" [sc. "of this genre of scientific writing"].⁴⁹⁸ Sellheim wants to read the term *ḥatīb* differently: as a "decree," namely one issued by the governor al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ ibn Yūsuf (d. 95/714) (on account of a collection of *ḥitāḥif* [divergent readings] material by the two scholars).⁴⁹⁹ We need to have a closer look at the relevant passages of the source work from which the existence of this book was inferred.

In his *Muḡaddimah (Introduction)*,⁵⁰⁰ Ibn 'Aḥyāh observes:

Of the vocalisation (*ṣaḥf*) and punctuation (*naḡf*) of the Qur'ān, it is said that 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān [r. 65–86/685–705] gave an order in this matter and had it performed. In Wāṣit, al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ took care of this (matter) and devoted considerable effort on it . . . While he was governor of 'Irāq, he commissioned al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī) and Yahyā ḥn Ya'mar to execute it and subsequently composed a book in Wāṣit about the readings (*ṣallāfa* . . . *ḥatībun fi ḥiḥ-qirāḥat*), in which the different current readings of the people regarding (those passages) in which the writing coincided were collected (*ḡumḥa fi ḥi mā ruwya min ḥitāḥif an-nās fi mā wāḡafa ḥiḥat*). For a long time after, people complied with it, until Ibn Muḡāhid wrote his book on the readings.

First of all, we have to take into account that Ibn 'Aḥyāh presents the report not as an established fact but as a tradition; in addition, indigenous reports about the introduction of vowel signs are not uniform. Besides al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ, Abū 'l-Aswad-Du'alī (d. 69/688) and others are also mentioned in this context.⁵⁰¹ Therefore the discussion of the book presupposes [32] that there is a measure of historical truth to the report. Irrespective of its historicity, it is part of a whole genre of tradition according to which caliphs (or, in the provinces, governors; or princes) charge scholars with writing down knowledge which previously had only been transmitted "orally" in scholarly circles, so that it could be made available to a wider audience. In addition to the reports discussed on pages 70 and 73,⁵⁰² we should recall the replies 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (d. 94/712–713) is said to have sent to the written requests of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705) concerning the biography of the Prophet⁵⁰³; further, the report according to which the Umayyad caliph Sulaymān (r. 96–99/715–717) commissioned Abū ḥn 'Uḡmān (d. between 96/71 and 105/723–724) to record the biography of the Prophet in writing⁵⁰⁴; and, finally, the tradition reporting that 'Umar II (r. 99–101/717–720) commissioned Abū Bakr ibn Muḡammad ibn Ḥazm (d. 120/738) and, somewhat later, Ibn Ṣiḥāb az-Zuhri (d. 124/742) to compile the first official codification (*ṣaḥīḥ*) of *Ḥadīḥ*.⁵⁰⁵

Apparently, our report wants to say that, following an order by the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ charged the two scholars with recording all the instances of *ḥitāḥif* (divergent readings) they could gather and making them available to him. Further, the text has probably to be understood as indicating that the governor compiled (or rather had the two Qur'ān experts compile) a "book" (whatever may have looked like) about the various (correct) readings. To that end, however

al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ needed tools in the form of vowel signs and diacritical dots, which he or al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Yahyā are said to have been the first to use (and thus introduce) for this purpose. The *qir'ān* (Qur'ān readings) "book" must have contained specific information on the verses in question and perhaps partial quotations. By following this "manual," individual Qur'ān readers could indicate the readings in the relevant places of their *maṣāḥif* (codices). For a long time afterwards, this "book" is said to have served in Wāsit as a guide for the reading of the Qur'ān [33] until it was replaced by Ibn Muḡāhid's work. However, the fact that we have so few reports about such a predecessor to Ibn Muḡāhid's book is suspicious. Be that as it may, we can probably at least conclude that, very much like 'Ujmān, al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ took certain measures to standardize the text of the Qur'ān.⁵⁰⁶

VI

O believers, when you contract a debt one upon another for a stated term, write it down, and let a writer write it down between you justly . . . and let the debtor dictate . . . and not diminish aught of it . . . And call in to witness two witnesses, men.

(*Sūrah* 2: 282)

The Qur'ānic commandment to have a debt put into writing by a scribe is closely connected to the requirement to consult two witnesses to confirm an acknowledgment of debt once it is recorded in writing. For this reason, classical Islamic legal scholars do not accept the validity of written documents in legal procedures without *the existence of two witnesses*.⁵⁰⁷ Immediately at the beginning of the chapter on sales (*Kitāb al-buy'*) of his *Kitāb aṣ-ṣurūḡ*, the earliest extant legal work on contracts, the Ḥanafite *faqīh* (jurisconsult) al-Tahāwī (d. 321/933) comments on *Sūrah* 2: 282 and writes⁵⁰⁸:

God, the Sublime and Almighty, decrees the recording of debts in writing . . . He then clarifies what He intends, (namely) why He intended what He had ordered about all this, he says: "In this way, God thinks, it is ensured that you act justly and [34] that your testimony is true, and (in this way it is) most likely that (later) you will not have doubts (about the testimony of the witnesses)" (2: 282). Thus, he lets them know that in written recording, there is *support for the (oral) testimony (qiwām aṣ-ṣahābah)*, by which the creditor's funds (*mal al-tālib*) are exactly determined and in which the debt of the debtor (*dayn al-matlib*) is defined . . .

In other words: written documents are useful mnemonic aids which serve to remind the parties of the conditions and sums involved in their agreement. But in addition, they require oral testimony, which constitutes the actual proof.

For this point of view, which was later in principle unanimously held by schools of law,⁵⁰⁹ the authorities uniformly adduce the following arguments:

- 1 One piece of writing resembles another piece of writing (so that they easily become confused; *al-kiṭāb yuṣbiḥu 'l-kiṭāb*).
- 2 A written document can be a mere draft or plan (*al-kiṭābah qad yakūnu li-taḡrībah*).
- 3 The writing could have been manipulated and the seal could have been tampered with (*qad yuṣmālu al-ā -ḥātīm wa-yuḥarrāfu 'l-kiṭāb*).

Therefore, a written document itself has to be confirmed by appropriate means that is, by oral testimony (*lā yuḥbatu 'l-lā bi-ḥuḡḡah*).⁵¹⁰

Even traditions about the compilation of the Qur'ānic text were influenced this point of view. One report tells us that, during both the first and the second collection, only those texts were accepted as genuinely Qur'ānic for which owner could provide two witnesses.⁵¹¹ Similar considerations prompted the historians al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823) and al-Maḍā'ini (d. 228/843 or some years later) (*ḥ*) Ibn Sa'd, d. 230/845, who quotes them) always to include a chain of witnesses (an *isnād*) as confirmation for every written document with a religio-political legal relevance quoted, especially the contracts the Prophet concluded with different tribes.⁵¹² Originally, these documents were kept and passed on in the families to whom the contracts were granted.⁵¹³ Relatively rarely, an informant states that he himself saw the document in question or refers to a document in [35] possess of a specific family.⁵¹⁴ As a rule, the document is confirmed very much as *ḥadīṡ* is confirmed: with a chain of witnesses.

At the root of the idea that writing only has a contingent or restricted value there has to be a deep and categorical mistrust of writing and everything written. Apparently, this mistrust was absent in the *gāhiliyah* (the period before Islam), but became apparent in the Qur'ān (namely in *Sūrah* 2: 282, as discussed above) and was then advocated, sometimes almost aggressively, by later traditionalists and legal scholars, philologists, and, finally, even by Christian Arab physicians. It *seems* as if writing can unambiguously and enduringly record the words of text. But can it really? Is it not true that writing is an easily manipulated tool? Even if we can, by writing, unambiguously and enduringly record a text's words, what do we lose by giving up in its favor the exchange of words between people? Is writing not something impersonal, dead? Is it not the case that the support offers restricts natural abilities?

Remarkably, Greek philosophy developed and elaborated the same idea. articulation was projected to the time during which "reading" finally outstripped "hearing" in philosophy (but also in other subjects such as historiography). In his *Phaedrus* (Stephanus 275a–276a), Plato records the following dialogue between Socrates (who famously did not write any books) and Phaedrus⁵¹⁸:

SOCRATES: . . . ["quoting" the Egyptian King Thamus, who supposedly said: Theuth, the inventor of the alphabet:] For your invention [36] [sc. that

the alphabet] will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it, through lack of practice at using their memory,⁵¹⁹ as through reliance on writing they are reminded from outside by alien marks, not from inside, themselves by themselves; you have discovered an elixir not of memory but of reminding. To your students you give an appearance of wisdom, not the reality of it...

PHAEDRUS: ... it seems to me to be as the Theban says about letters.

SOCRATES: So the man who thinks that he has left behind him a science in writing, and in his turn the man who receives it from him in the belief that anything clear or certain will result from what is written down, would be full of simplicity... in thinking that written words were anything more than a reminder to the man who knows the subject to which the things written relate.

PHAEDRUS: Quite right.

SOCRATES: Yes, Phaedrus, because I think writing has this strange feature, which makes it like painting. The offspring of painting stand there as if alive, but if you ask them something, they preserve a quite solemn silence. Similarly with written words: you might think that they spoke as if they had some thought in their heads, but if you ever ask them about any of the things they say out of a desire to learn, they point to just one thing, the same each time.⁵²⁰ And when once it is written, every composition is trundled about everywhere in the same way, in the presence both those who know about the subject and those who have nothing at all to do with it,⁵²¹ and it does not know how to address those it should address and not those it should not. When it is ill-treated and unjustly abused, it always needs its father to help it; for it is incapable of defending or helping itself.⁵²²

PHAEDRUS: [37] You're quite right about that too.

SOCRATES: Well then, do we see another way of speaking... both how it comes into being and how much better and more and more capable it is from its birth?...

PHAEDRUS: You mean the living and animate speech of the man who knows, of which written speech would rightly be called a kind of phantom.⁵²³

Judaism offers a further parallel to the early Islamic opposition to writing.⁵²⁴ The other fundamental religious work of the Jews after and in addition to the Bible is the "oral teaching," the Talmud (including the Mišnah). Originally, it was only intended to be orally transmitted and not to be written down. It took centuries for the Talmud to assume its final form and to be disseminated in writing, during which there was considerable protest and polemic against its recording in writing.

As in Judaism, Islam had, above all other books, a sacred book. Even its final written collection and publication was at first met by misgivings and resistance. But soon afterwards, the ('Umanic) consonantal text was accepted as the ultimate authority. The written dissemination of *Ḥadīṭ*, which emerged as the second, originally orally transmitted teaching alongside the scripture, the Qur'an, met

with much fiercer criticism. Students who wanted to write down traditions were confronted with the rhetorical question, "Do you want to adopt it as copies of the Qur'an?"⁵²⁵ [38] As in Judaism, the desire to grant written form only to the word of God but not to the second teaching existing alongside "scripture" militated against its written recording.

For monotheistic scholars, Jewish as well as Islamic, these concerns operated in addition to the general mistrust of writing discussed earlier. Finally, there was another factor at work in Islam: mistrust caused by the deficiencies of the Arabic script. It was put forward as an argument against purely written transmission in the second/seventh century by traditionalists, and later also by philologists and others, even by Christian Arab physicians.⁵²⁶ Incidentally, this is a very rational and valid argument, since the Arabic script can, like virtually no other script, be particularly ambiguous, especially if it is not carefully punctuated and vocalized, a frequent occurrence in practice.

Apparently, the period that witnessed the switch from orality to literacy in teaching was perceived as a critical time in each of the three cultures, the Greek, the Jewish, and the Islamic. As the older medium was eclipsed or its extinction seemed imminent, people became aware of the values lost with its demise.

As with the Greeks and in Judaism, writing, in practice, finally claimed victory in Islam, too. But in Islam in particular, scholars upheld the idea—or sustained the fiction—that writing should have an auxiliary function at most in the transmission of learning (and in establishing legally valid proof). Until the time in which literary books as we know them emerged, and even beyond that time,⁵²⁷ the true transmission of knowledge remained oral, from person to person—at least in theory.

Addenda

P. 64

According to H. S. Nyberg,⁵²⁸ the written *Avesta* (which was redacted by the Sasanids but never accepted by the priests who had orally transmitted the text over centuries with painstaking accuracy) existed solely in a few master copies which were deposited in the most important religious and political centers of the realm.

P. 70

For the—very frequently attested—efforts of various caliphs, princes, and governors to have the knowledge of the scholars put into writing, I have coined the term "court impulse"; see p. 217 n. 1046 and, most importantly, Schoeler (1996a, p. 46 ff.).

In his recently published article *The Beginnings of Historical Writing by the Arabs: The Earliest Syrian Writers on the Arab Conquest*,⁵²⁹ A. Elad has discussed my ideas and tried to identify the works which I label as "literature of the schools

for the schools" (apparently together with other early works) as "real books." He writes:

it can be argued that this type of composition . . . was fairly popular from quite early on . . . It seems that many quite early compositions from the end of the 1st through the middle and end of the 2nd centuries were, in fact, published works in the sense that they were well known among scholars, and not only among rulers.⁵³⁰

Some of the examples he cites: the *Kitaḥ al-maṭālib al-ʿarab* (*Book of the Evil Deeds of the Arabs*), allegedly written by Ziyād ibn Abīhi (d. 53/673); 'Abīd ibn Šaryāh al-Ġurhumī's *ʿAḥbār* (*Reports*) of the ancient Arab and Persian kings (which, according to Ibn an-Nadīm, were written down at the behest of the caliph Mu'āwiyah); the *Mağāzī* ([*Prophetic*] *Campaigns*) book of Abān ibn 'Utmān⁵³¹; and several others. I do not share Eliad's views; on the works in question, cf. now Schoeler (2002b, p. 58ff.). The fact that some scholars loaned their notes or lecture scripts to their students for copying⁵³² (i.e. transmission by *munāwalaḥ*) does not entail that these writings were "finally revised" and "fairly popular."

Pp. 71–72

We might have to abandon this piece of evidence for the deposition of master copies of non-religious (scientific) works. The *Fihrist* (*The Index or Catalogue*) tells us⁵³³: *fa-kāna kullu-mā ʿamila min-hā qabūlatan wa-ʿaḥyāga-hā ʾila ʾn-nās kataba muṣḥafan wa-ḡāḥala-hū fī masğid al-Kūfah*, "once he had finished and published one tribe [i.e. tribal *dīwān*] of them [sc. 80 tribal *dīwāns*], he wrote a volume and deposited it at the mosque in Kūfah." In all probability, the term *muṣḥaf* here denotes a Qurʾān copy which Abū ʿAmr aš-Šaybānī copied and deposited in the mosque out of gratitude to God who had allowed him to finish another work. (I owe this information to Prof. J. Hämeen-Anttila, Helsinki.)

P. 82, VI

For the question of whether a written document constitutes a proof, cf. now Johansen (1997).

P. 198 n. 483

Cf. now p. 43, *ad* p. 28 and *ad* p. 30.

4

ORAL POETRY THEORY AND ARABIC LITERATURE

Few theories have been as successful and influential and become as popular in American and European literary studies as the "theory of oral-formulaic composition"⁵³⁴ developed by the American classicist M. Parry.⁵³⁵

Parry's⁵³⁶ starting point was a study of Homeric epithets.⁵³⁷ Together with the nouns they qualify, he identified them as [206] "formulae" and categorized Homeric style as "traditional" and "non-individual." Struck by the comparability of Homeric epics and the living traditions of Serbian and other orally transmitted heroic poetry, Parry later shifted his original distinction between "traditional" and "individual" poetic style in the direction of the opposition between "oral" and "literary" poetry.⁵³⁸ We can speak of a "theory of oral-formulaic composition" from the moment Parry claimed that the Homeric formulae betray not only a lack of individuality, but also reveal a tendency to economize, thus being characteristic of an oral and improvised presentation: henceforth, Homer became an "oral poet."

Since the beginning of the 1950s, a quick succession of studies applied Parry's theory to other epic (and later also non-epic) traditions.⁵³⁹ Common to all these works is that their authors take the formulaic character of a text or its absence to be the decisive criterion for its oral or written origin. One book out of the colossal wealth of material deserves to be mentioned: A. B. Lord's *The Singer of Tales*.⁵⁴⁰ [207] It is considered the standard work in the field of oral poetry research. Lord, a student and later the successor of Parry at Harvard, constantly defended, popularized and, in some respect, developed the "theory of oral-formulaic composition" after Parry's untimely death in 1935. In recognition of his role, the theory is now also called the "Parry/Lord theory."

Many of his students and successors revered Parry as a revolutionary innovator, even a genius and a prophet. In reality, he was anything but a creator *ex nihilo*. In his highly readable introductory study to his father's collected articles, his son Adam Parry rightly observes:

It could fairly be said that each of the specific tenets which make up Parry's view of Homer had been held by some former scholar . . . Parry's achievement was to see the connection between these disparate contentions and observations.⁵⁴¹

For the purpose of our own study, we are not directly interested in Parry's contribution to Homeric research. However, as Middle Eastern Studies specialists, we really ought to be familiar with the work of the Turcologist W. Radloff, who, in the words of K. von See, had already pronounced in the nineteenth century "everything which is relevant, interesting and usable for the study of oral folk epics."⁵⁴² In his footnotes, Parry explicitly refers to Radloff on five occasions, often in the form of extensive quotations.

In the preface to *Der Dialect der Kara-Kirgisen* (*The Dialect of the Kara-Kirgiz*), the fifth volume of his *Proben der Volksliteratur der nördlichen türkischen Stämme* (*Samples of the Folk Literature of the Northern Turkish Tribes*),⁵⁴³ in which he published his German translation of the Kirgiz *Manas* epic he had recorded from oral recitations, [208] Radloff gave a detailed account of, among other subjects, the singers, their "art of improvisation,"⁵⁴⁴ and the fact that they adjusted their songs⁵⁴⁵ to their respective audience. He observed that the singer "is unable to recite a song twice in exactly the same form"⁵⁴⁶ and that he "is able to sing for a day, a week or a month."⁵⁴⁷ His explanation: this is possible because the singer, when improvising, has a number of readymade formulae—which Radloff calls "recitation elements" and "image elements"—at his disposal,⁵⁴⁸ and so on. Moreover, Radloff had already likened his Kirgiz singers to the Greek *aitoidoi* and had, based on his own observations about the genesis of an epic poem, established the link with Homer.⁵⁴⁹

Radloff's findings as well as his suggestions on the subject of the "epic question"⁵⁵⁰ were taken up not only in the study of folk songs⁵⁵¹ and in Slavic Studies,⁵⁵² but also in Homeric research.⁵⁵³ They were apparently ignored by Arabists, even though it must have been tempting to examine the so-called Arabic folk epics⁵⁵⁴ in the light of Radloff's results.

Only in the 1970s did the study of Arabic literature become aware of the "oral theory"—in the guise of the Parry/Lord theory, not Radloff's ideas. Characteristically, the ancient Arabic *qasīdah*, a non-epic genre, was the first and main focus of scholarly attention [209] as a potentially "oral-formulaic" literary phenomenon, not the so-called folk epics.

M. Zwettler's *The Oral Tradition of Classical-Arabic Poetry*⁵⁵⁵ was not the first attempt to apply the theory to the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* genre: it was preceded by J. Momroe's article entitled *Oral Composition in Pre-Islamic Poetry*.⁵⁵⁶ They both agree on the main points, but differ in a number of details; at one point in his book, Zwettler takes Momroe's views to task in detail.⁵⁵⁷

In the following discussion, we will focus mainly on Zwettler's study, but we will occasionally refer to some of Momroe's ideas. We will begin with an outline of the book's contents.

In the first chapter, *Oral Tradition and Traditional Texts. Questions of Applications* (pp. 3–39), the author gives an account of the Parry/Lord theory as far as it is relevant for his study. Following a number of scholars who developed and revised the theory, he proposes a number of modifications to make it applicable to pre- and early-Islamic poetry. He maintains that Lord's distinction between

poetry composed either orally or in writing is, in this form, as misleading as the discrimination between "oral performance-cum-composition" on the one hand and "oral performance from a 'memorized' text" on the other.⁵⁵⁸ Rather, features of oral composition technique are in evidence not only in poetry developed during oral recitation, but also in poetry composed in writing, as long as it was written for oral recitation.⁵⁵⁹ Furthermore, the situation is the same for poets improvising during a recitation or professional reciters improvising on the basis of a "fix text," especially if the text in question had originally been intended for oral presentation: the formulaic and thematic structuring of the text as well as the changing nature of its textual form are in both cases the same.⁵⁶⁰ According to Zwettler, the most important distinction we have to make is not between poet-composed orally or in writing, but between *heard* and *read* poetry.⁵⁶¹

[210] In his second chapter, entitled *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry* (pp. 41–96), Zwettler examines whether the key features of oral poetry generally accepted by advocates of the oral poetry theory can be found in the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* (ode). They are first (and foremost), its strongly formulaic character; second, the scarcity of enjambment; and third, stereotypical themes.

To demonstrate its formulaic character, the author analyzes a *single* poem, namely Imru' al-Qays' *Murallaghah* (suspended ode) (meter: *iawīl*). He compares it to 5,000 verses in the *iawīl* meter by Imru' al-Qays himself and several other early poets.⁵⁶² Closely following Parry and Lord,⁵⁶³ he detects formulae where duplicates of certain words, word groups, or verses of a poem, preferably in the same metrical position, can be found at least once in the text stock he compares to poem to.⁵⁶⁴ In addition to verbal formulae, he also takes "structural" or "syntactic" formulae into account: these are word patterns made up from metrical positions grammatically equivalent morphemes which occur in the same metrical position (e.g. v. 40b of the *Murallaghah*: ... *bayna dhīrin wa-niḡwālī*, "[a girl] between shift and a wrap [sc. in size]" and v. 67a: ... *bayna iawīrin wa-naḡatin*, "[antelope] both bulls and does").⁵⁶⁵ The statistical analysis shows that different parts of the poem display differences in the frequency of formulaic elements.⁵⁶⁶ The most important result: as a whole, the *Murallaghah* displays a percentage of verbal formulae amounting to 38.9 percent. In its formulaic "density," it is thus roughly equivalent to the old French *Chanson de Roland*.⁵⁶⁷

Concerning the scarcity of enjambment, Zwettler observes that the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* (ode) resembles Homeric poetry in this respect down to the level of details.⁵⁶⁸ Finally, he equates the stereotypical themes of oral epics (identical similar descriptions of [211] recurring scenes such as Homeric assemblies) with the recurrent images, motifs, and scenes of the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* (ode).⁵⁶⁹

In the third chapter, *The Classical 'Arabiyya as the Language of an Oral Poet* (pp. 97–188), the author explains the specific features and idiosyncrasies of the 'arabiyyah (pure Arabic) when compared with spoken language (e.g. its retention of archaisms and, most of all, its preservation of the peculiar inflection in analogy with Parry's explanations of the peculiarities of the Homeric artificial language: like his formulae, the oral poet receives words and word forms from

predecessors. As long as they fit into the metrical scheme, these elements—which are often linguistically incompatible—do not cause any bother. As a result, we arrive at a fixed, almost immutable poetic language—both in Arabic and Homeric poetry.⁵⁷⁰ The most prominent feature of this chapter, to which we shall not return, is the extensive critical remarks about older, more recent, and the latest literature on the issue of the *ʿarabīyah* (pure Arabic).

In his fourth chapter, *Variation and Attribution in the Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry* (pp. 189–234), Zwettler attempts to demonstrate that only the Parry/Lord theory can adequately explain the changeability and variability of ancient Arabic poetry (the transmission of *dīwāns* [poetic collections] in different recensions; the wealth of variants; and the changing number and arrangement of verses of one poem in different compilations).⁵⁷¹ According to the author, a *qasīdah* (ode) was recited differently in each recitation (of the poet or transmitter)—similar to the heroic epics studied by Parry and his successors.⁵⁷² Obviously, this means that we cannot reconstruct an original version or archetype with text critical methods. Rather, the different recensions represent equal versions.⁵⁷³ Further, the large amount of variants is not the (deplorable) result of the deficiencies of a long period of oral transmission.⁵⁷⁴ On the contrary, we are dealing with a poetry “that lives through variants and reworkings.”⁵⁷⁵ This does not exclude the occurrence of obvious slips of the pen, which of course [21.2] can also be found.⁵⁷⁶ Zwettler explains the relative infrequency of variants in the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* (ode) compared with oral epics of other peoples with factors such as the shortness of the poems, in the process of the transmission of which outright memorization played a recognized role.⁵⁷⁷ Citing a passage from Ibn Rašīq’s *al-Umdah fi mahāsin al-šīr* (*The Fundament Concerning the Fine Points of Poetry*), he claims that a *qasīdah* (ode) had a more or less fixed core which the poet or transmitter kept in memory and on the basis of which he then improvised during individual recitations. The divergences in formulae “density” he found in different passages of the *Muallagah* (suspended ode) serves, for Zwettler, to confirm his hypothesis.⁵⁷⁸

The author is convinced that his new approach also allows him to solve the two problems of the controversial authorship of many verses and the authenticity of a great number of poems: since all oral poetry partakes of a shared pool of formulae, it is no surprise to find identical or similar verses and verse passages in different poems of the same or other poets.⁵⁷⁹ On the subject of the authenticity of ancient Arabic poetry, Zwettler maintains that the poems of bedouin transmitters of the second/seventh to the fourth/tenth centuries, which are still steeped in bedouin traditions, are so similar to demonstrably “ancient” poems or those thought to be ancient that they could not be told apart or are even identical with them. Products of the compiler *rawīs* (*rawīyahs*, transmitters) on the other hand, which already belong to the written tradition, can easily be distinguished from this “ancient” poetry.⁵⁸⁰

I think that the idea that pre- and early-Islamic *qasīdah* (ode) poetry can be understood with the tools of a (however modified or adapted) Parry/Lord theory

is altogether unfeasible. In what follows, I will attempt to show

- 1 that this idea, as well as analogous ideas conceived by other followers of Parry and Lord, who apply the “theory” to a diverse set of antique and mediæval texts transmitted exclusively in writing, is based on false premises;
- 2 that this idea is based on a thoroughly flawed concept of ancient Arabic *qasīdah* (ode) poetry;
- 3 that the abundance of variants—Zwettler ironically labels it the “corrupted state of the traditional texts”⁵⁸¹—which supposedly only reveals its true significance in [21.3] the light of the “theory”, is in fact not an exclusive feature of the ancient Arabic “oral” *qasīdah* (ode), but also occurs in early ‘Abbāsī poetry, which belongs to “written” culture.

My comments on the first point will be brief, since the issue has already been widely discussed.⁵⁸²

Even if the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* (ode) were to display the three (supposed) characteristics of “oral poetry”, we could not conclude that it is “oral poetry” in terms of the Parry/Lord theory. Both Zwettler and Monroe commit a logical error, which we encounter again and again with proponents of the oral poetry theory: they reverse the statement they claim to be empirically proven, namely, that “all oral poetry is formulaic (displays scarcity of enjambment, and so on),” and maintain that “all formulaic (and so on) poetry is oral.” Quite apart from the fact that the first claim is probably also wrong,⁵⁸³ the second claim cannot be inferred from the first—“neither in logical nor in psychological terms.” Formulaic character, lack or scarcity of enjambment, and stereotypical themes do not constitute proof for the proposition that a text transmitted only in writing was orally composed—let alone for its being “oral poetry” in terms of the Parry/Lord theory!

To cite an example with which Zwettler must also be familiar, for it is dealt with in an article to which he refers written by M. Curschmann,⁵⁸⁴ the *Elegy* of Waltheovon der Vogelweide (“Owe war sint verswunden alliu miniu jar!” “Alas, when have all my years gone?”) displays a formulaic density hardly found in an Arabic *qasīdah*. In addition, it shows scarcity of enjambment much more pronounced than in the Homeric epics and other (true or supposed) “oral” epics. It also contains stereotypical themes. Still, it is neither an improvised nor a “traditional” orally transmitted poem, but a highly personal, planned, and elaborated creation of the poet, which belongs fully to written culture.⁵⁸⁵

[21.4] Further, it is incorrect that “written” poetical texts, “although perhaps initially set down in writing, are so structured with a view to oral rendition—i.e. s. s. formulaic and additive in style” that they are “for all practical purposes, indistinguishable from ‘orally composed’ poetry.”⁵⁸⁶ formulae in written poetry, which Parry/Lord and other exponents of the “theory” can only envisage in very small doses, although Zwettler explicitly allows for a higher statistical density under certain circumstances,⁵⁸⁷ invariably differ from oral formulae in their function, often enough also in their *form*.⁵⁸⁸ Whatever the function of such “written” formulae

it was certainly no longer to facilitate improvisation for a singer.⁵⁸⁹ In the case of certain formulae, their written origin can be spotted almost immediately. To cite but one example Zwettler is also familiar with⁵⁹⁰: in the Middle High German epic *Orendel*, we find very long series of formulae spread over a substantial number of verses, that are, while relatively far removed from each other, repeated *verbatim*. Such sequences of formulae *must* have been copied from each other!⁵⁹¹

In the processes of transmission of pre- and early-Islamic poetry from the poets to those scholars [215] who were the first to undertake systematic collections and record them in writing, oral transmission undoubtedly played a prominent, but probably not an exclusive role.⁵⁹² For this reason, one might be inclined to call it "oral" or "traditional." Yet, we have to draw a sharp distinction between this form of oral poetry and other forms, especially those which correspond to the criteria of Parry/Lord. The differences in genre which Zwettler plays down (he must play them down in order to approximate ancient Arabic poetry and "oral" epics)⁵⁹³ have at least *one* implication we cannot under any circumstances ignore: only they can adequately explain why *qasīdahs* (odes) are almost without exception transmitted under the name of a composer, while the epics are anonymous.

Let us take a brief look at old Icelandic poetry. Since in a number of aspects, it resembles ancient Arabic poetry to a surprising degree, the two traditions have often been compared. Zwettler himself occasionally turns to it for comparative purposes.⁵⁹⁴

There are two main poetical genres in old Icelandic poetry:

- 1 *Edda* poetry that consist of songs about gods and heroes and is predominantly epic;
- 2 *Skald* poetry that includes praise songs and lampoons, love songs, dirges, and also descriptions. It is thus similar in terms of its genres to ancient Arabic poetry.

Without exception, Edda poetry is transmitted anonymously, whereas Skald poetry is invariably connected with the name of a composer. K. von See, a specialist in Nordic Studies, explains this fact as follows⁵⁹⁵:

Skald poetry is an art form which intends to achieve an immediate effect—in the form of a polemical, eulogistic or erotic poem—an art form in which "mastery" plays an important role.... And in all art forms which aim for effect, the guarantee of its effect depends on the mastery of its exponent.... Heroic poetry, on the other hand, is an epic genre. Its function is not to achieve an immediate effect; it does not praise, it does not vilify; it simply narrates.... it is not... an "art" as it was understood at the time. [216] Therefore, its creators remained anonymous.

[...]

In Skald poetry, elements of magic are still alive: they become manifest in its strongly formal character—a regular feature of magical texts... texts

which are supposed to have magic or cultic effects are often emphatically not anonymous.

(As Arabists, we are reminded of the magical roots of ancient Arabic polemical poems famously studied by Goldziher,⁵⁹⁶ which also invariably carry the name of a composer.)

If we consider that in the Arabic literary tradition too, an anonymously transmitted epic folk poetry arose (the 'Antar epic; the tale of the *Banū Hūd* etc.)⁵⁹⁷—albeit only later—the parallels between Arabic and Icelandic poetry become even more striking.

Zwettler is particularly concerned with a "presumed lack (!) of anonymity in the classical Arabic tradition."⁵⁹⁸ In his explanation of this fact, he rightly stresses the special importance of the "social and cultural role" of the poet in pre-Islamic times and emphasizes the lack of similarity in social rank between them and medieval Frankish or Spanish singers⁵⁹⁹—he could also have included the Greek thapsodes or modern Kirgiz and Yugoslav singers.

For a full and satisfactory answer to his question, Zwettler need only put *morror* stress on the *kind* of poetry poets belonging to these different traditions produced: the different social positions of the poet—propagandist and tribal spokesman on the one hand, folk entertainer on the other—that caused a lack of anonymity in one tradition and its occurrence in the other(s) *depend* on the poetic genre involved. But Zwettler's approach excluded this possibility: he does not wish to allow for generic differences in "traditional," orally transmitted poetry. For him, there is only one, undifferentiated "heroic" poetry.⁶⁰⁰

Old Icelandic poetry teaches us that it was in fact the genre, not the poet's social position or the kind and composition of his audience, which is responsible for anonymity: [217] for its two main genres, the audience (the warrior nobility) an apparently at least some of the poets were identical; in the case of the *Atlakviða* of the *Edda*, scholars have suggested that the Skald poet Þórbjörn Hornklofi was its author.⁶⁰¹

"In the archaic era... poetic works were initially created through improvisation."⁶⁰² We can accept this observation by R. Blachère without reservations. It was not only during the *ǧāhiliyyah* (period before Islam), but also in Umayyad and 'Abbāsid times that impromptu poetry existed; it is practised even today. The ability to improvise is in no way connected with a milieu or an era. Ab Nuwās (d. c.200/815) possessed the ability to an impressive extent: many of his wine and love poems as well as his polemical and satirical poems—but certainly not his long praise *qasīdahs* (odes)—are "genuinely improvised poems."⁶⁰³ For often the redactors of the Abū Nuwās *dīwān* (collected poems), Ḥanzab al-Iṣfahānī (d. c.360/970) and aṣ-Sūfī (d. 335/946) as well as Abū Hifṭān (d. c.255/869), author of the *ʾAḥbār ʾAbī Nuwās* (*The Reports Concerning Abū Nuwās*) and a person acquainted with the poet, report the circumstances under which this or that poem was produced. Frequently, they explicitly note that Abū Nuwās improvised certain verses, either spontaneously without prior thinking (*irtǧālan*) or after show-

reflection (*baʿīhan*).⁶⁰⁴ Another prominent example is al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965): he mastered both forms of improvisation⁶⁰⁵ (and not, as Zwetler claims, only the second).⁶⁰⁶ Further, the ability to improvise was expected of Andalusian poets.⁶⁰⁷

[218] This form of improvisation is, however, not the same as the improvisation technique of folk singers described by Radloff, Parry, and Lord. In the first case, the poet is not prepared for the topic that he is given or that he spontaneously chooses himself (as a consequence, particularly in earlier times, improvised poems were thematically much freer than non-improvised poems).⁶⁰⁸ In this situation, the poet is also hardly able to rely on prefabricated formulae; thus, he can in most cases only produce relatively short poems, *qirāhs*. In the other case, the poet has been familiar with his material from the time of his training; he uses it again and again to compose his poetry and, with his pool of formulae, he is able to extend and shorten his compositions at will.⁶⁰⁹

In early as well as later times, the great classical Arabic *qasīdah* (ode) poems were not, or only in exceptional cases, were improvised. Rather, they were the result of a slow, systematic, and often laborious process.⁶¹⁰ For this, we have both external and internal evidence. The testimony of Arabic literary critics and theorists is the most important source for external evidence. In his *Kiṭāb al-bayān wa-l-taḥyīn* (*The Book of Eloquence and Exposition*), al-Ġāhiz (d. 255/868–869) writes⁶¹¹:

Among the (desert) Arabs (*ʿarab*), there were poets who had *qasīdahs* (odes) lying around for a whole year or for a long time, all the while looking at them again and again, turning them over in their mind and repeatedly changing their opinion about them.... And they used to call these *qasīdahs* “year-long” (*ḥawṭyān*), “celebrated, everlasting” (*muqalladāt*), “rimmed” (*munuqqahāt*), “solidly composed” (*muḥkamāt*); at that time, those who had composed them became (through them) full masters (*fahī*) and expert poets (*ṣāʿir muḥliq*)...

Al-Ḥuṭayʿah said: “The best poem is the year-long (*ḥawṭī*), refined (*muḥakkak*)”.... Everybody (operates) thus who improves his entire poetry and lingers at every verse he composes and casts a scrutinising glance over it again and again, until he makes each verse of the *qasīdah* as good as the others.... Whoever earns a living from his poetry and covets the gifts of nobles and chiefs and the reward of kings and leaders in the *qasīdahs* recited at state banquets (*qasāʾid as-simāʿiyyin*) and the long poems recited on feast days, has no other choice but to work like [219] Zuhayr and al-Ḥuṭayʿah and their ilk (who worked for a whole year on their poems).⁶¹²

These reports about the “year-long” *qasīdahs* of Zuhayr and al-Ḥuṭayʿah mark the longest time the composition of a *qasīdah* could take according to ancient Arabic

convention. In another anecdote reported by al-Ġāhiz, we learn that some poet needed substantially less time.⁶¹³

One poet told another: “I compose a *qasīdah* each hour, but you produce one (only) once a month. Why is that?” The other replied: “Because I don’t receive [sc. poetic inspiration] from my *ṣayyān* [demonic genius] as you do from yours.”

Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889) provides similar information, which he probably derived directly from al-Ġāhiz.⁶¹⁴ However, he is our only source for the following two reports about improvisation⁶¹⁵:

A poet, aṣ-Ṣammānī (d. c. 30/650), while on a journey spontaneously recited poem in the *raġʿaz* meter. After six (half) verses, however, he had to stop because he could not find more rhymes (in *-āḡ*). He then changed the rhyme and came up with 14 half verses in the *raġʿaz* meter (in *-āḡ* which is easier to rhyme). In another report, an improvised poem by al-Ḥusayn ibn Mutaʿyr (d. 170/786) is heaped with praise because, after short reflection (!), he was able to recite 15 verses in the *kāmm* meter to describe a torrential rain shower (on the easy rhyme *-āḡī*).

None of these poems are long, multi-part *qasīdahs* (odes). We only have very few reports about a poet improvising a *qasīdah*. One such case is the *Muqalladāt* (suspended ode) by al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥillizah.⁶¹⁶ But scholars have (in my opinion quite rightly) suggested that the report about the composition of the poem is fictitious.⁶

Naturally, Zwetler knows the argument that the composition process of the *qasīdahs* of Zuhayr, among others, is said often to have taken an entire year.⁶ [220] He attempts to counter it by pointing out that “oral composition” (of Yugoslav singers, for example) could possibly also require some time for preparation and that this preparation period could vary between different traditions and poets—“if the preparation time of a singer of heroic epics, which he can use to prepare mentally and concentrate on his task, but which is certainly not sufficient to compose his entire recitation, was not entirely different from the process of slowly and laboriously composing a poem and its repeated revision and touching up described in our sources for the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* and, incidentally, for recent Bedouin poetry.”⁶¹⁹

We know of such methods of working also from other “primitive cultures” In his book *Primitive Song*,⁶²⁰ C. Maurice Bowra, incidentally one of the most prominent followers of the oral poetry theory (who, however, does not fall into the trap of applying it to all sorts of non-epic poetic genres), discusses the compositional methods of Andaman singers:

The Andamanese are known to mature songs in their minds until they are ripe for performance at some suitable occasion, and though the songs are always very short, their preparation may take days while the singer decides what to include and what to exclude from a form.⁶²¹

Similar practises are known of singers from Arnhem Land and the Inuit.⁶²²

Against the theory of Zwettler that "oral poetry" is, for all practical purposes, indistinguishable from poetry perhaps composed in writing, but intended to be recited orally, I would like to put forward a different idea: "oral poetry," composed in a slow, systematic, and often laborious process (as described above), might not be indistinguishable [221] from "written poetry," but they are at least comparable in so far as in both forms the poet can consider carefully both individual expressions as well as the structure of the poem as a whole—unlike the situation he is faced with when improvising poetry.

We will now discuss internal evidence for the fact that the *qaṣīdah* (ode) was almost never the result of impromptu composition. First, we have several meters with a complex set of rules instead of just *one* for "oral poets" (for impromptu composition, ancient Arabic poets in most cases use *rağaz*, the simplest meter).⁶²³ Further, we have to remember the very strict rhyming rules that have to be maintained throughout the entire poem; imperfect rhymes are a relatively rare occurrence. On the other hand, poems that conform to the criteria of Parry/Lord or in which improvisation plays a role mostly dispense with rhymes or only operate with assonance. Where we do find rhymes, for example, in medieval German ballads, the rhyme schemata are frequently simple, the rhyme very often imperfect or missing ("orphans" instead of rhymed verses).⁶²⁴

Ancient Arab poets themselves provide us with even more compelling evidence: in their *qaṣīdahs*, they occasionally allude to their methods or even describe them. Famously, the *Muḥallaḡah* (suspended ode) by 'Antarah (d. c. 600) (which both Zwettler and Monroe studiously ignore!) begins as follows⁶²⁵:

Have the poets left anything to be patched up ...
hal ǧādara š-šarā'u min mutaradami...

The verse implies a *modus operandi* which is worlds apart from that of an "oral poet": the author of the *Muḥallaḡah* (suspended ode) feels restricted by a convention which requires him to clothe a given theme in a new, perhaps even original, form. Obviously, he is hard pressed to pour the "old wine" into "new skins."

The poet Suwayd ibn Ku'ā gives the following description of the creative process that led to his poem⁶²⁶:

[222] I pass my nights at the gates of the verses (*qawāfi*, lit.: rhymes) as if minding there attentively (or pacifying; or imitating) a herd of wild animals, yearning for their customary pastures,
Watching over them until I weary just before—or a little after—daybreak—
then I fall asleep.

[...] When I fear that they will be transmitted to my discredit, I drive them back below my collar-bones, in dread lest they come to light.

Fear of Ibn 'Affān⁶²⁷ compelled me to drive them back, so I straightened and polished them (*fa-taqqafu-hā*) for a full year and well into the spring. And though I had in myself even more (verses) than those, I could see no other option than to obey and listen [i.e. to Ibn 'Affān].

*ʔabū bi-ʔabwābi l-qawāfi ka-ʔanna-mā-huṣāḏi bi-hā sirban min-a l-waḥš
mazzāʔ
ʔukūlu-hā huṭā ʔarriṣa baʔda mā / yakūnu sulayyan ʔaw buṣyādan
fa-ʔahṡā*

[...]]

*ʔūā hifju ʔan turwā ʔaloyya raddah-hā wa-ʔā l-tarāqī haṣyatan ʔan latalā
wa-ḡaṣṣama-nī huwfu ʔni ʔAffāna radda-hā fa-taqqafu-hā hawlān harīda
wa-marbaʔā
wa-qad kāna fī naḡsi ʔaloy-hā ziyādātun fa-lam ʔara ʔilā ʔan ʔif-a wa-ʔasma*

With such a concept of poetry, the idea of literary property must have developed early on (according to Parry, the concept is not applicable to oral-formulaic poetry, since singers drew on a shared pool of material).⁶²⁸ Thus, Ḥassān ibn ʔāḥ (d. 40/661 or later) can boast⁶²⁹:

I do not steal from the poets what they have said; rather, my poem does not fit with theirs.
lā ʔarīqu š-šarāʔa mā natiqūbal lā yuwaḡqu šira-hum širi

This verse has two implications: first, that plagiarism was already discussed and rejected in early times, and second, that at that time, plagiarism was a problem which occurred, was noticed, and vigorously denounced. This applies to an even higher degree to recent bedouin poetry: A. Musil reports that the Riwāla reprimand and even despise their poets for their plagiarisms. Thus, they have the proverb *qaṣṣād kaḏāb*, the *qaṣīdah* poet is a liar.⁶³⁰

Even if it is true that later Arabic literary critics were interested more in the *sariḡāt* (plagiarisms) of modern poets, they clearly did not, as Zwettler claim almost (!) completely ignore the ancients.⁶³¹ On the contrary, in his *Qurādat al-dahab fī naḡd ʔaṣṡar al-ʔarab* (*Shavings of Gold in the Criticism of the Poems of the Arabs*), Ibn Rašiq mentions them fairly frequently.⁶³² In his *al-ʔumdaḡ fī mahāsin aṣ-šir* (*The Fundament Concerning the Fine Points of Poetry*), quoting 'Ab al-Karīm an-Naḡāf, he makes the following observation about one notorious case of ancient Arabic plagiarism, in which ʔarafāḡ copied verbatim an entire verse b Imru' al-Qays (except for its rhyme word)⁶³³: '[223] "Some people are prepared to overlook everything except the (case of the) verses of Imru' al-Qays and ʔarafāḡ since they only differ in their rhyme word." Put differently, it was regarded as the worst possible form of plagiarism to copy a verse almost completely. Even the mildest critics could not shut their eyes to it. Thus, it is not at all true that

as Zwettler maintains, "medieval literary theorists who discussed the subject of plagiarism among poets seem to have disregarded almost (!) entirely (!) literal verbal recurrences as such."⁶³⁴

Incidentally, we are not dealing here with commonplace motifs or images nor motifs which, "at the onset, were indisputably created," but "so often reused that they would enter into everyone's speech."⁶³⁵ As is generally known, such motifs were excluded from the discussion of plagiarism.⁶³⁶

For Zwettler, these cases always involve formulae which the two poets in question derived from a common pool. This brings us to the question of the formulaic nature of ancient Arabic poetry. On this issue, I would like to register my doubts about Zwettler's (and Momroe's) method of identifying a verbal formula. I am absolutely convinced that no randomly picked ancient Arabic *qasīdah* (ode) displays the formulaic density which Zwettler established for Imru' al-Qays' *Murallaghah* (suspended ode). As we have seen above,⁶³⁷ Zwettler identifies a verbal formula whenever in the pre- and early-Islamic tradition a certain word group recurs *once* (preferably in the same metrical position).

Now, as Zwettler himself acknowledges, quoting Arberry, the *Murallaghah* of Imru' al-Qays is "at once the most famous, the most admired and the most influential poem in the whole of Arabic literature."⁶³⁸ [224] Therefore, when analyzing word groups occurring in the *Murallaghah* and recurring (in *later* poems) in an identical or similar form, we *also* have to allow for the possibility of an imitation, a "quotation," or a case of plagiarism—as in the Tarafah verse mentioned on p. 97—instead of a formula.

- If we find but a *single* parallel in a later poem, *imitation* would be the most likely reason.
- If we detect the same word group in a poem of a *contemporary* of the poet, we would have to exclude the possibility that the poems in question are not *referring to each other* in any way before identifying it as a formula. For example, Imru' al-Qays no. 4 (according to Ahlwardt's edition) has so many correspondences and similarities to 'Alqamah no. 1⁶³⁹ that they cannot have been purely accidental. Consequently, the ancient Arabs assumed that they were the result of a contest between the two poets.⁶⁴⁰ Apart from this obvious case, 'Alqamah and Imru' al-Qays display so many similarities⁶⁴¹ that we would be well advised not to attribute each and any correspondence immediately to the presence of formulae.
- Whenever a word group or verse recurs in different poems of one and the same poet, it can in most cases be better explained as a conscious replication or some form of revision than as a formula. Only if such an expression is frequently repeated should we consider the possibility that we are dealing here with a formula.

Zwettler establishes an above average formulaic density in the case of the first verse of Imru' al-Qays' *Murallaghah*.⁶⁴² Let us examine his method of searching

for and identifying formulae with the help of the first half of the verse in question:

qifā nabkī min dīkārā habībīn wa-manzīlī

Stop!, let us weep at the memory of a beloved and a stopping-place

Another poem in the *tawīl* meter by Imru' al-Qays also begins with the same half-verse. Only the rhyme word differs: there, it is *wa-ṣifānī* ("and the recognition [sc. of her abode]") instead of *wa-manzīlī* ("and a stopping-place"). Therefore Zwettler labels *qifā*... *wa* ("stop!... and") as a verbal formula. However, it cannot offer any other occurrence of *qifā nabkī* ("stop! let us weep"); the one word *dīkārā* ("memory") occurs once more in a *nasīb* (elegiac section) by 'Antarah, *m dīkārā* ("at the memory of") in a *nasīb* (elegiac section) by al-A'sā, and *h-dīkārā habībīn* ("on account of the memory of a beloved") in a dirge by Ḥassān ibn Tābit, but, as Zwettler himself notes, in a different metrical position. The alleged formulaic character of *manzīlī* ("a stopping place") is even more problematic. The only parallel occurs in verse 76 of the *same* poem, where the word occupies the rhyme position. [225] Yet, the recurrence of the same rhyme word in a poem was considered permissible after only seven verses! Furthermore, Zwettler lists the following structural formulae: *manzīlī* ("a stopping place"), since it corresponds to its metrical (?) and syntactical equivalent *ṣifānī* ("recognition") in the other Imru' al-Qays poem mentioned above: *habībīn* ("a beloved,") since 'Antarah has the question (mentioned above), al-A'sā *Qutaylatā* ("Qutaylah", a woman's name—as these names obviously have a very different metrical structure than *habībīn*, "beloved," this cannot be correct).

Given what we have said above (on p. 98), I cannot see why a verse should become a formula just because a poet repeats it once—and *only* once—in its entirety or in part. One reason for the occasional reappearance of individual words or small word groups in the same metrical position in later poems seems to me that later poets were familiar with the Imru' al-Qays verse in question and were somehow responding to it. Even during the lifetime of the Prophet, Imru' al-Qays was regarded as the most famous of all ancient poets; and poets such as Labīd freely acknowledged his superiority.⁶⁴³ Considering the restricted and conventional themes treated in the *nasīb* (elegiac section) of a *qasīdah* (ode), such repetitions are only to be expected. Finally, even according to Parry's (not at all stringent) criteria, the 'Antarah quote—a single, two-syllabic word *dīkārā* ("memory")—has no evidentiary value.⁶⁴⁴

The situation is somewhat different with the "structural formulae." In fact, we find such phenomena fairly frequently in Arabic (and not only ancient Arabic) poems. In part, they can be explained—I agree with Zwettler on this point—but the fact that, by means of the wording in question, poets unconsciously (or, as I believe, often also consciously) completed a rhythmic or syntactical scheme they were familiar with. This, however, does not say anything about the form c

the process of poetical creation that gave rise to these "structural formulae." Poets can vary patterns in the slow, systematic oral (or written) composition process as well as in quick, improvisational [226] composition—especially if their choice of words and motifs is severely restricted by conventions.⁶⁴⁵ Although Zwettler is still convinced that syntactical formulae "must be accorded an exceedingly strong corroborative value"⁶⁴⁶ in assessing the oral-formulaic character of poetry, Classicists have, at least since the publication of W. Minton's *The Fallacy of the Structural Formula*,⁶⁴⁷ known that the extended concept of formula according to Lord and others (a formula = a verbal formula + a structural formula) is not capable of demonstrating the oral character of a poem. Summing up the results of Minton's comparison between the diction of Homeric poetry and that of Apollonius of Rhodes, A. Heubeck observes that "'formulae' (as defined by Lord) can be found in equal measure in the products of Hellenistic poets and in Homer."⁶⁴⁸

One element in Imru' al-Qays' *Mirallagh* (suspended ode) which could actually be called formulaic is the beginning of the hunting scene (verse 53: *wa-qad ʿagīdī wa-ʾi-layru fī wukūmāhī-hā* . . . "and often I sallied forth while the birds were in their nests . . ."). Still, the two parallels from 'Alqamah and 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ which Zwettler cites in addition to several quotations from Imru' al-Qays' own poems,⁶⁴⁹ are hardly enough to make his point. Yet, the expression develops into a formula at the latest in the Umayyad period with the emergence of the hunting poem as an autonomous genre. Poems composed by aṣ-Ṣamʿādal (fl. c. 101/720) (and later by Abū Nuwās [d. c. 200/815] and Ibn al-Muʿtazz [d. 296/908]) very frequently begin with similar passages (*qad ʿagīdī wa-ʾi-layru fī muswaddī-hī*, "often I sallied forth while the night was still swathed in black"; *qad ʿagīdī wa-ʾs-subḥu fī mukammī-hī*, "often I sallied forth while the morning was wrapped [in its gown]," etc.)⁶⁵⁰ But all these poems are written in the *ragʿaz* meter, not in *ʾawfī*, by simply dropping the *wa-* ("and") in front of *qad* ("often"), the greater part of the half verse in the *ʾawfī* meter can be altered into two feet of a verse in the *ragʿaz* meter. This raises the question whether Parry's definition of a formula can be applied in its original form to the Arabic *qasīdah* genre. It was originally developed on the basis of two poetic traditions which use only one meter each (the Homeric hexameter and the 10-syllabic verse in Serbo-Croat epics); in those two cases, it had appeared reasonable to include metrical conditions. [227] In view of such stereotypical phrases such as *da-hā, dā dā* ("leave her", "leave that"), and *fa-da-hā* ("so leave her"),⁶⁵¹ that frequently mark the transition between the *nasīb* (elegiac section) and the following theme in a *qasīdah* and which occurs in various different measures, I would answer the question in the negative.

Parry's definition of a formula⁶⁵² and its applicability to ancient Arabic poetry can be considered from another angle. Obviously, a certain "essential idea" occurring in ancient Arabic poetry is not always necessarily expressed with the same word group. Rather, motifs which are at the root of certain formulae are only partly expressed by those formulae; they are also partly rendered with different expressions.⁶⁵³ Considering these facts, might it not be better to apply the rhetorical term *topos* as defined by E. Curtius? This term, which seems once more

to have attracted attention in recent rhetorical research⁶⁵⁴ in spite of or perhaps even because of its vagueness (Curtius defines it as a "fixed cliché or a schematic thought and expression"),⁶⁵⁵ would have one key advantage: it encompasses formulae ("fixed . . . schematic . . . expression"), but is not restricted to them. Thus our discussion on pages 99–100 has thrown considerable doubt on the supposed formulaic character of the first verse of Imru' al-Qays' *Mirallagh*, but it is probably beyond dispute that it is "topical"—according to Curtius's definition—since the schematic thought (an appeal to the two companions to halt), but not the schematic expression (*qifā nabhi* . . ., "Stop! let us weep"), appears in a large number of *qasīdahs* and is therefore "fixed" and "stereotypical."

On the basis of a quotation by Ibn Raṣīq, Zwettler wants to confirm his theory that the verses introducing different thematic sections of the *Mirallagh* are more or less fixed. He infers that, as the "core verses" of the poem, they were recited more or less [228] from memory, whereas the intervening passages, which were less formulaic, were improvised.⁶⁵⁶ It is obvious, however, that he mistranslated and misinterpreted the passage: it does not prove anything.

In the chapter in question, Ibn Raṣīq discusses short (*qīṭā*; like the English "piece," it can also mean "fragment") and long poems (*ijwāl*). He reports⁶⁵⁷:

Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' was asked: "Was it the custom of the (desert) Arabs to compose long poems (*uṣfū*)?"—He replied: "Yes, so that people would hear from them (*li-yusma'a min-hā*, i.e. the Arabs)."—People asked again: "Did they also compose short poems (*uḡẓā*; the root *q-ṭ-* does not occur here)?"—He answered: "Yes, so that people could keep something from them (*li-yuḥiẓa 'an-hā*, i.e. again the Arabs) in memory."—al-Halīl ibn Ahmad said: "(Poetical) speech is long and copious, so that it can be understood; (on the other hand, it is) concise and condensed, so that it can be kept in memory. Prolixity is preferable for apologies, warnings, intimidations . . ."

The passage wants to explain the occasions and purposes to which long or short poems are better suited. Both Arabic philologists claim that long poems, *qasīdahs* are to be preferred where many and beautiful words have greater effect; the poet should keep it short, on the other hand, if he wants people to remember his words. It is therefore absolutely impossible to identify the "short" poems mentioned by Ibn Raṣīq in the quotation with the fixed core elements of a *qasīdah* postulated by Zwettler—it is emphatically *not* the *qasīdah* Ibn Raṣīq is talking about!—and to equate his "long" compositions with what Zwettler interprets as the improvised intervening verses.⁶⁵⁸

We now come to our last question (3): is the Parry/Lord theory our only way to understand adequately the profusion of variants in ancient Arabic poetry? Undoubtedly, pre- and early-Islamic poetry was subjected to frequent modifications on the long journey from its creators to its redactors. In addition, comparisons with the composition and transmission of recent bedouin poetry showed that the poets [229

themselves often "published" different versions of their works. In his book *Arabia Petraea*, A. Musil reports⁶⁵⁹:

Often, such poems [sc. the *qasīdahs*] are long, and the poet almost never composes them all at once [compare the difference to the composition process in oral epics]... Frequently, the poet himself replaces individual words, even entire verses, with others he likes better, which, however, others do not know and often never accept. Thus, one hears different recensions not only of *qasīdahs* of a dead poet, but also of those of a living, even of a physically present poet. Even though they often differ substantially in length and sequence (!), the poet recognises all of them as his literary property. When such poems are recited around the camp fire, partisans of the different versions often argue about them, deny that this or that verse originated with the poet and attribute it to others instead.

Thus, the different recensions are *not* new and different improvisations (as is the case in oral epics), but new versions, revised and improved by the author, that, however, have not been able to supplant earlier versions already in circulation.

For earlier times, too, we can probably safely assume that different versions of a *qasīdah*, which often seem to us to be of equal quality, or variants of a verse could have originated with the poet of the *qasīdah* himself. We also know that ancient Arab poets frequently asked their transmitters (*rāwīs*) to review their poems and that, after the death of their masters, the latter revised or improved⁶⁶⁰ details of their *qasīdahs*, that is, they revised words or passages they regarded as "unfinished" and which did not seem sufficiently "polished." Alongside these conscious interventions, there were of course—as Zwettler freely acknowledges⁶⁶¹—mnemonic errors in the process of oral transmission. In addition, we also have to allow for occasional mistakes on the part of the redactors of the *dīwāns* (collected poems). Finally, in some cases, the medieval Arabic philologists themselves suspected forgeries.⁶⁶²

Before we proceed, let us correct one incorrect claim Zwettler makes about the *rāwīs* (transmitters) of the ancient Arabic *qasīdahs* (odes). [230] Zwettler's aim is to stress the similarities between the situation obtaining for singers of heroic epics and the Arabic poets. On the authority of Bräunlich,⁶⁶³ he notes that the main task of the *rāwī* was not to preserve and spread his master's poems, but to prepare himself for his own future career as a poet (many transmitters in fact later became famous poets in their own right).⁶⁶⁴ However, this claim is incorrect or only partly correct, because we know of many *rāwīs* who never produced a single verse of their own. In his book on al-Mutanabbī, the *qāḍī* (judge) 'Alī al-Ḡurgānī (d. 392/1002) remarks⁶⁶⁵:

'Abid ('Ubayd?) was al-A'sā's transmitter, but people never heard a complete (poetic) expression from him. Likewise, one never heard anything from Ḥusayn, the transmitter of Ḡaṭīr, or that of al-Kumayr, Muḥammad ibn Sahl, and Sā'ib, that of Kuṭayyir.⁶⁶⁶

Therefore, it remains the case that *all rāwīs* were *primarily* transmitters. On some of them were at the same time apprentices of their master preparing for their own poetic career. This also invalidates the parallel with the "oral" epic poets, for whom the function of poet and transmitter invariably coincided.

The factors listed above, namely the occurrence of divergent versions of a poem from the very beginning, corrections by transmitters as well as other phenomena described by Blachère⁶⁶⁷, are sufficient adequately to explain the textual variety of the *qasīdahs*, their often uncertain ascription, and so on. To confirm this point we will now cross-check it against the transmission history of the *dīwān* of an early 'Abbāsīd poet, Abū Nuwās, [231] who was an exponent not of the oral, but the written tradition.

It might come as a surprise for advocates of the oral poetry theory to learn that the editor of the *dīwān* of Abū Nuwās had to contend with the very same problem which, according to their theory, only the editors of an ancient Arabic *dīwān* should have experienced⁶⁶⁸: many poems were attributed not only to Abū Nuwās but to other poets as well.⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore, there are four different recensions of the *dīwān*—the most important are those of Ḥanzab al-Iṣfahānī (d. c. 360/970) and al-Ṣūfī (d. 335/946)—with different opinions about the authenticity of many poems. Finally, there is hardly a poem which does not differ from recension to recension, manuscript to manuscript, and, if repeated by the same recensor, from chapter to chapter, even from place to place.⁶⁷⁰ Apart from slips of the pen, variant may result from misunderstandings, omissions, and additions of verses or whole parts of a poem. They may consist in divergent arrangements of verses, and in different versions, though of equal quality, of one or more verses.⁶⁷¹ Very frequently, we find the same verse in different poems with the same meter and rhyme. The double occurs now in another poem by Abū Nuwās, now in a poem by another poet.⁶⁷²

[232] If there is a difference at all between the state of textual transmission of early 'Abbāsīd poetry and that of pre- and early-Islamic poetry, it is surely gradual but certainly not fundamental.

The reason is the fact that the transmission of early 'Abbāsīd poetry did not yet differ substantially from that of ancient Arabic poetry: poets such as Baṣṣār (d. c. 167/783–784), Abū Ṭ-ʿAlāhiyah (d. 211/826), and Abū Nuwās (d. c. 200/815) did not yet compile and edit their *dīwāns* themselves; this became common practice only after c. 392/1000. Rather, they continued to entrust them to their *rāwīs* as did the ancient poets.⁶⁷³ In the case of the Abū Nuwās *dīwān*, the text was only brought into its final shape and put into writing some 150 years after the poet's death. Even though transmitters now used writing to a much higher degree than in earlier times, we are confronted with a similarly "corrupted" state of texts.⁶⁷⁴

Therefore, we are left with two alternatives: we can either dilute the Parry/Lor concept of oral-formulaic poetry even further than Zwettler has already done and apply it also to early 'Abbāsīd poetry, which belongs to the written tradition. Or we can decide to dispense with the concept of oral poetry altogether in the study of both early 'Abbāsīd and ancient Arabic poetry.

One point needs to be stressed: even though variants in different recensions of the same collection of poems often represent versions of equal quality which do not depend on each other, [233] it is also clear that in many cases, errors of transmitters or recensers—and not only those of copyists!—can be corrected by comparing them to the respective readings of other recensions. This applies in equal measure to ancient Arabic and early 'Abbāsid poetry.⁶⁷⁵ To decide *what* to make of specific variants—whether to classify them as scribal errors, mistakes of a recensor, or equivalent readings—we have to analyze each individual case carefully. It is not possible to make such a decision in each and every case, but still, we are very often in a position to judge a variant.

Now, does the Parry/Lord theory give us criteria to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic ancient Arabic poetry?⁶⁷⁶ Zwettler wants to mark as inauthentic certain works by compilers who usurped the title of *rāwī* (*rāwīyahs*, e.g. Ḥammād [d. c. 156/773], are probably meant), for they, in contrast to the bedouin transmitters, were not part of the living oral tradition. He believes that he can easily distinguish their products from authentic material.⁶⁷⁷ This, however, does not seem to be the case: at least, it would have to be demonstrated first. Suffice it to say that after no less than 12 centuries of medieval Arabic and modern European and American philological activity, we are still unable to pass judgement on the authenticity of the *Lamīyāt al-ʿArab* (*The Ode of the Arabs Rhyming in [the Letter] Lām*) ascribed to aṣ-Šanfārah, one of the best and most famous (authentic or alleged) pre-Islamic *qasīdahs*.⁶⁷⁸ The individual long suspected of having forged it, Ḥalaf al-Aḥmar (d. c. 180/769), was *not* even a bedouin, but a townsman and the son of a manumitted slave of non-Arabic, possibly Persian, extraction.⁶⁷⁹ He was also accused of fabricating poems ascribed to Ta'abbata Ṣarran and parts of the *dīwān* of Imru' al-Qays.⁶⁸⁰

I doubt that the advocates of the Parry/Lord theory can offer a convincing solution to this problem. Rather, it [234] seems to me that we have to leave the question open for now.

The theory of oral-formulaic composition cannot be applied to ancient Arabic *qasīdah* poetry. There is, however, another genre of Arabic poetry it could probably be brought to bear on: the so-called folk epic (such as the *ʿAntar* epic).⁶⁸¹ Here, we have at least most of the features Radloff, Parry, and Lord have found in Kirgiz and Yugoslav "oral" epics, all of which we looked for in vain in the ancient Arabic and *qasīdah*: the anonymity of the composers; identity of composers and reciters (*rāwī* [transmitter] or *muhaddith* [narrator] and *šāʿir* [poet])⁶⁸²; improvised recitation which caused each performance to be a different version in its own right and the lack of a fixed text or "original";⁶⁸³ the reciters' use of formulae and stereotypical themes to facilitate improvisation⁶⁸⁴; the heroic narrative material based on historical events, but poetically stylized and strongly laced with fictional elements; and the mostly uneducated audience drawn from the urban middle classes or the rural populace, and so on.⁶⁸⁵

[235] But even here, we have to exercise care in applying and adapting the "oral theory." Contrary to Serbocroat epics, its Arabic counterparts are not entirely

versified. Rather, the narrator alternates between prose (and rhymed prose) and verse. This would call for a modification of Parry's definition of a formula.

Furthermore, even at an early stage of their development (and also later), the written recording of Arabic folk epics seems to have played a substantial role alongside its oral performance. For example, the *Banū Hīlāl* epic may have been written on the basis of a commission, only to fall into the hands of folk narrators later on.⁶⁸⁶ In fact, we probably owe the wealth of manuscripts of Arabic folk epics (mostly from the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries) in our libraries to the fact that the narrators needed aides-mémoire.⁶⁸⁷ In the case of Arabic folk epics, we indeed have to do with something akin to "improvisations on texts recorded in writing" (the Arabic folk narrators therefore resemble the Greek rhapsodes rather than the *axoidoi*). However, already in the nineteenth century, one [236] group of Cairene narrators, the *ṣanāʾirah*,⁶⁸⁸ read their material out instead of freely reciting it.

Different from this hybrid (oral/written) type that is more at home in towns and cities than villages is a second type, as Aḥmad Ruṣṣī Ṣāliḥ discovered for the *Banū Hīlāl* epic: a purely oral form which is still alive in the rural population. Its main characteristics are that its plot shows similarities to recent local history (the uprising of ʿUrābī Paša 1881–1882) and that its heroes, while retaining their original names, display characteristics of politicians of this era.⁶⁹⁰

This type, however, which in many respects resembles the Kirgiz and Yugoslav "oral" epic, is *not* the original type; rather, it developed out of the urban oral-written form.

Thus, in this case, the relation between "writing and oral tradition" has to be seen differently and in a less negative light than Lord's assessment of the Yugoslav epics in particular and "the (oral) epic" as a genre in general.⁶⁹¹

Addenda

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Since the 1980s, we observe a marked decrease in interest in American and European literary criticism in the theory of oral poetry, especially its "general tendency to try to force all oral performances into the theoretical parameters of the Parry/Lord theory."⁶⁹² P. Heath notes:

Because they [sc. the researchers] usually based these attempts on written works whose orality was not an established fact, and since these works were often ancient or medieval texts which . . . formed insufficient data for large-scale analysis, these attempts at theoretical refinement have usually resulted in producing more confusion rather than less.

Since the end of the 1980s, there evolved a broad consensus also in Arabic Studies that attempts by Zwettler and Monroe to apply the Parry/Lord theory to the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* genre have failed.⁶⁹³

Criticism in works that discuss Zwellter's and Monroe's ideas and which appeared at the same time or later than the article above has mainly focused on two issues:

- 1 Criticisms of the concept of *formula* (cf. pp. 98–101).⁶⁹⁴ J. Mattock observes that of the poems that go under the name of Imru' al-Qays, a great number of lines or parts of lines, short phrases and themes are not unique but recur in several poems. Lines that have parallels elsewhere in his *Diwān* (*Collected poems*) are especially frequent in his *Murallaqah* (suspended ode). The wording of these parallel lines is identical or almost identical. Still, Mattock feels that for the most part, these repetitions are not frequent enough to be explained as formulaic. He also points out the agreements between Imru' al-Qays, Tarafah, and Zuhayr, of whom the last two, he believes, have consciously borrowed from Imru' al-Qays.⁶⁹⁵

A. Bloch also shows that most of the recurring word groups Zwellter identifies as formulae according to the Parry/Lord theory do not qualify as such. Rather, they are often quotations, imitations, conscious repetitions, etc.⁶⁹⁶ In addition, Bloch lists sayings, *gnomoi*, and recurring sentences⁶⁹⁷ as well as "a certain typical phraseology which reoccurs in due course and which was employed by different poets independently of each other."⁶⁹⁸ For each of these phenomena, he quotes numerous examples. Bloch marshals the following argument to prove that these for the most part are *not* formulae according to Parry, designed to facilitate improvisation: if they served this function, they would in each instance have to occur in the *same* metrical position and in the *same* words. However, on the basis of a variety of examples, Bloch demonstrates that the recurring word groups very often *change their position in the verses and vary in their wording*.⁶⁹⁹ Two examples are provided here⁷⁰⁰:

- In a hunting scene, Imru' al-Qays⁷⁰⁰ gives the following description (meter: *ṭawīl*):

fa-lāryan bi-lāyin mā ḥamalānā ḡulamāna 'alā zahni maḥbūkī 's-sarānī
muhannabi

And only with great effort did we lift our equerry on to [a horse]
with a tightly-knit back-bone, and beautifully curved haunches
[or ankles]

In a verse by Zuhayr,⁷⁰¹ we find the same word group (*fa-lāryan...*) in the description of the same scene, also in *ṭawīl*. Al-A'sā, however, uses the *mutaqarib* meter and introduces slight *changes*.⁷⁰²

fa-lāryan bi-lāyin ḥamalānā 'l-ḡulāma kaḥan fa-'arsala-hū
fa-mutahan

And only with great effort did we lift the equerry [on the horse],
against [its] will, and he then let it slip and worked [it] hard

It would be absurd to claim that this is a formula. Rather, in the verse of Zuhayr and al-A'sā, we find conscious *borrowings*. In all likelihood these poets chose the same (or almost the same) word group explicitly refer back to the expression of Imru' al-Qays and Zuhayr, respectively (highlighted quotations or allusions).

- The (metonymic) word group

nahdu 'l-marātīlī, "one with strong flanks" (i.e. a horse)

occurs at the beginning of a verse in the *kāmil* meter by the pre-Islamic poet al-As'ar al-Ḡu'fī.⁷⁰³ We find it also in *kāmil*, but in a different position in a verse by 'Antarah.⁷⁰⁴ Ḡarīr⁷⁰⁵ has it in the *basī* meter. Finally, the same word group, expressed as a *sifah* (attribute) (*nahdu marātīlīh*), recurs in Zuhayr⁷⁰⁶ (in the *ṭawīl* meter) and al-Hansa⁷⁰⁷ (the *basī* meter). In these cases, we probably have to do with a "typical phraseology which reoccurs in due course and which was employed by different poets independently of each other."

Bloch cites the ease with which the Arabic language can be made to fit poetic meters as the reason for the frequent occurrence of identical word groups in different meters. This phenomenon in turn is, according to Bloch, due to the ideal harmony between language and poetic meter in Arabic. "All that means, however, that formulae *to facilitate the fitting of language into poetic meters were unnecessary* in old Arabic—unlike ancient Greek, where dactylic hexameter in particular presented numerous challenges to the syllabic structure of the language."⁷⁰⁸

In his article entitled *Formel und Zitat*, Th. Bauer presents a precise definition of the term "formula" and distinguishes it sharply from the term "quotation." He writes:

A formula is a quantity of textual elements E_{1-n} resembling each other which are employed by several text producers P_{1-n} in various literary texts T_{1-n} with the aim of calling the attention of the recipients to the other occurrences of E_{1-n} .⁷⁰⁹

Since formulae can occur in different meters, they most certainly do not serve the purpose of facilitation improvisation. Examples for real formulae, on the other hand, are the following beginnings of *qasīdahs*: *li-man ṭalātun* (whom belong the traces"; in either the *ṭawīl* or *wāfir* or *mutaqarib* meter) *li-man-i 'd-dāru* ("to whom belongs the abode"; in the *ḥafīf* or *ramal* meter) and *li-man-i 'd-dīyāru* ("to whom belong the abodes"; always in the *kāmil* meter).⁷¹⁰

2 Criticism of the fact that Zwettler (and also Momroe), like many other exponents of the Parry/Lord theory, completely ignored the generic distinctions of oral poetry and tried to impose an inapplicable model on the ancient Arabic *qasīdah* genre. In particular, the authors in question were taken to task for either not considering or passing over important characteristics of the still living tradition of *nabati* poetry (on this term see the addendum to page 101). This poetry is the direct descendant of ancient Arabic tribal poetry—and it demonstrably does *not* conform to the Parry/Lord model.⁷¹¹

In one of the first reviews of Zwettler's book, the reviewer A. Schippers observed that he "over-emphasizes the universal applicability of the Parry-Lord-theory."⁷¹² Invoking R. Finnegan's *Oral Poetry, Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context*,⁷¹³ Schippers refers to the "diversity between the different traditions of oral poetry." The same point was also made in the review by H. Kilpatrick.⁷¹⁴

The most important contribution, however, was made by S. A. Sawayan. Following, among others, the lead of A. Socin⁷¹⁵ and A. Musil,⁷¹⁶ in 1985 he published his research into *nabati* poetry, based on fieldwork in the area.⁷¹⁷ His findings confirm, complement, and extend the observations made on the basis of Musil's results.⁷¹⁸ Sawayan explicitly discusses the ideas of Zwettler and Momroe (1972), refutes them,⁷¹⁹ and observes: "the orality of this poetic tradition is distinctly different from that of the oral epics... described by Albert Lord."⁷²⁰

Among other points, he maintains that

- some [sc. *nabati* poets] are literate and others, the vast majority, are illiterate⁷²¹;
- each *nabati* poem has an original version by an original composer...; hence, the emphasis is on memorization of the poem word by word⁷²²;
- an illiterate poet, just like a literate poet composing with pen in hand, will compose his poem slowly with a great deal of reflection and deliberation⁷²³;
- whether literate or illiterate, a *nabati* poet will polish his composition and review it several times⁷²⁴;
- a *nabati* poet makes an enormous effort even to compose a relatively short poem⁷²⁵;
- the processes of composition and transmission are two independent activities, one preceding the other, just as in written literary transmission⁷²⁶;
- oral and written composition and transmission coexist and overlap⁷²⁷;
- a *nabati* poem might originate as a written text and become popular later, circulating orally and becoming the subject of variations so common to the oral mode of transmission⁷²⁸;
- slow and deliberate composition prior to delivery is characteristic of oral traditions of various cultures⁷²⁹;

- the poet may write down his poem and send it with a courier⁷³⁰;
 - the most important function of formulae is not generative but stylistic
- In his magisterial four volume work *Oral Poetry and Narratives from Central Arabia*,⁷³² in which he has collected, translated, and analyzed the poems of numerous contemporary tribal poets, P. M. Kurpershoek—advisedly does not discuss the Parry/Lord theory and its possible (or better: impossible) application to *nabati* poetry.

Additional relevant literature on contemporary Arabic poetry can be found in bibliographies of Sawayan (1985) and Kurpershoek (1994–2002).

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Ad-Dindān,⁷³³ a recently deceased bedouin poet, describes a similar experience as Suwayd ibn Kurā.⁷³⁴

- 1 Last night I stayed awake, unable to sleep...
- 2 because of talk spread by that fool, Gabbāni...
- 5 My verses I carefully mold in eloquent language:
One given to poetry cannot possibly abandon his art.
- 6 When others hum the tune, I strike up the merry melody,
When they ululate the song, I keep the rhyme going

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On indigenous Arab critics and their discussion of the relation between recurring word groups and literary ownership, cf. S. A. Bonebaker's article *Sariqa Formula*. The author notes:⁷³⁵

Many early poets and critics were concerned with the question of literary ownership; they recognized that there were deliberate borrowings, both such as may be termed quotations (and as such permissible) and others which the poet may have practised while hoping that they would pass unnoticed.

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On the issue of Imru' al-Qays and 'Alqamah, cf. J. E. Montgomery's *Alqamah al-Fahl's Contest with Imru' al-Qays*. The author maintains that "the attribution of one poem to 'Alqamah and one poem to Imru' al-Qays is dubious. Rather, 'Alqamah and Imru' al-Qays' poems should be treated as oral versions of the same poem."

P. 101f.

This still living tradition of Arabic bedouin poetry is nowadays called *nabati* (اڤ-اڤ-اڤ *an-nabati*). On this subject, cf. the remarks by Sawayan discussed above.

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A large number of books in Arabic and several European languages have been devoted to Arabic folk epics. Examples are M. C. Lyons' three volume work entitled *The Arabian Epic. Heroic and Oral Story-Telling*⁷³⁷ and P. Heath's sur-

of relevant research, *A Critical Review of Modern Scholarship on Sirat 'Antar ibn Shaddād and the popular Sira*.⁷³⁸ For additional literature, cf. the article *Sira Sīa biyya* in EI², vol. 9, p. 664 f.

My contention that the Parry/Lord theory can probably be applied to Arabic folk epics (*ṣīyar*, sg. *ṣīrah*; e.g. *Sīrat 'Antar*, *Sīrat Banī Hīlāl*, etc.), but only after modifying its criteria and definitions, has been fully confirmed; cf. Heath (1988). The author demonstrates that a particular, frequently recurring description, namely that of a lion, is indeed an example for "oral-formulaic style as described by Lord and Parry".⁷³⁹ Since the description in question is not expressed in verse but in rhyming prose, Heath calls for "further development and clarification" of the Parry/Lord theory and a broader definition of formulae: "There is not a one-to-one correlation of phrase to idea here; rather the work uses different recurrent phrases to express a single idea." He also observes: "*Sīrat 'Antar* constantly relies on different sets of recurrent word groups to express single ideas."⁷⁴⁰ On account of its rhyming prose, "the more stringent requirements of verse form and meter are absent" and "the phenomenon of enjambment is not a significant factor in the *Sira* style."⁷⁴¹

In addition to Heath, B. Connelly⁷⁴² and D. F. Reynolds⁷⁴³ maintain that it is both possible and makes sense to apply the Parry/Lord theory to Arabic folk epics.

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On the issue of oral or written transmission of the Arabian Nights, cf. R. Irwin, *The Arabian Nights. A Companion*.⁷⁴⁴

5

ORAL TORAH AND ḤADĪṬ

Transmission, prohibition of writing, redaction

I

In 1918, J. Horowitz made the following claim:⁷⁴⁵

Ḥadīṭ and Qur'ān relate to each other as oral and written doctrine do in Judaism.

This apparently obvious analogy was not, however, generally recognized in the field of Islamic studies at the time of Horowitz; J. Goldziher had mentioned it in fundamental treatise *Ueber die Entwicklung des Ḥadīṭh* (*On the Development of Ḥadīṭ*) only to dismiss it resolutely as "misguided" and "wrong."⁷⁴⁶ [214] In the context, Goldziher had maintained that the evidence collected by A. Sprenger the early written recording of *Ḥadīṭ*⁷⁴⁷ militated against the idea that early generations of Islamic scholars wanted to restrict the application of written recordings of the Qur'ān alone and have *Ḥadīṭ* accompany it as oral teaching only. Incidental Sprenger⁷⁴⁸ and in his wake Goldziher, were already aware that the written *ḥadīṭ* material their studies pointed to did not consist of "books in a literary sense,"⁷⁴⁹ but of "scripts, . . . Perhaps notebooks, collections of individual sayings . . . for private use."⁷⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Goldziher had to acknowledge that a large number of traditionalists objected to the act of writing down *ḥadīṭs*. According to Goldziher, this "aversion against writing" was not the predominant view from the beginning but rather "the result of prejudices conceived at a later stage."⁷⁵⁰ It marked the beginning of a longlasting discussion among *Ḥadīṭ* scholars about whether traditions should be retained in memory alone and transmitted orally or whether they could be put into writing without reservation. However, Goldziher twice explicitly classified the debate as purely "theoretical" and maintained that it had bearing on the "generally accepted practice" of writing down *ḥadīṭs*.⁷⁵¹ Thus, did not allow that, after an early period which permitted the unreserved writing and recording of *Ḥadīṭ*, theological considerations and religious scruples emerged resulting in a widespread rejection of writing and bringing the written recording of *Ḥadīṭ* material to an end. (This is the position expressed in a stand-

work, which set out to dispose of one "myth," that of a long period of oral *Ḥadīṭ* transmission, only to introduce another "myth" by misrepresenting Goldziher's account.)⁷⁵²

Now, Goldziher's rejection of the analogy quoted above rested on his notion that Jewish oral doctrine, that is, the contents of the Talmud (*Mišnah* and *Gemara*) and the accompanying [215] *Midrash* works⁷⁵³—which are today, like the written doctrine (consisting of the Pentateuch or Bible), available in written (i.e. printed) form—were in fact originally transmitted through the centuries in an exclusively oral tradition. Today, we know that this was not the case: we have plenty of evidence for the use of written records.⁷⁵⁴ There never was a formally decreed, generally recognized prohibition against writing down oral doctrine. Admittedly, however, "frequently, strong opposition against writing down... arose... especially against writing down *Halakot* (rules of religious law)." ⁷⁵⁵

This opposition was directed not so much against the act of writing down itself, but rather against "written recording for the purpose of *public* use".⁷⁵⁶ In this context, S. Lieberman availed himself of the Hellenistic categories of *ekdosis*, or *synggramma* (an authorized edition or an actual book) and *hypomnēma* (written notes for private use) for his comparison.⁷⁵⁷ Only the Bible was a *synggramma*: incidentally, it was supposed only to be read out from the written page and not recited from memory in the synagogue. Oral doctrine on the other hand—as far as it had been put into writing—was for a long time available only in the form of *hypomnēmata*. These were not allowed to be used in the synagogue and public debates. At all events, oral doctrine was taught and transmitted without any written texts during the entire Amoraeon (Talmudic) period (c. 200–500 CE).⁷⁵⁸

The facts listed above should be sufficient to provide further evidence for Horowitz's analogy which Goldziher had so emphatically rejected.⁷⁵⁹

Let us now return to the methods employed in the transmission of "oral doctrine" in Judaism and Islam. In what follows, we will see that, on closer inspection, not only do we find exact parallels in individual aspects; [216] it will furthermore become clear that many results of the research into the transmission methods of the oral Torah can be fruitfully applied to an analysis of corresponding aspects of the transmission of *Ḥadīṭ*.⁷⁶⁰ Obviously, we find divergent aspects and developments as well as parallels.

First of all, we want to show that the "oral" mode of transmission (as we know, the term "oral" has to be taken with a pinch of salt) of Talmud and *Ḥadīṭ* gave rise to similar problems, engendered similar phenomena, and brought about similar topoi. Thus, we find discussions on both sides as to whether the *blind* can serve as reliable transmitters. A possible reason for disqualifying them as completely suitable would of course be their inability to verify their knowledge through consulting written records.⁷⁶¹

On both sides, students made notes during lessons. Jewish students used writing tablets or notebooks in codex form (hebr. *pīnaqsiyōt* from Greek *pinakes*) and so-called secret (private) scrolls (*m^e gilṭol s^e ṭarīm*). These served as "memory

books" (*sifrē zikārōn*).⁷⁶² On the Islamic side, we not only find writing tablets (*ṭalwān, sabḥurān*) from which writing could easily be erased,⁷⁶³ also notebooks (*karārīs*, sg. *kurrāsah*). The use of such notebooks was occasionally criticized on the grounds that they resembled copies of the Qur (*masāḥif*).⁷⁶⁴ Since they were not supposed to be recordings for eternity,⁷⁶⁵ so scholars required their students to delete their notes after memorizing them. Many traditionists made provisions in their will for their written records to be destroyed—burned or buried—after their death.⁷⁶⁷ Even opponents of written records, however, did not object to the so-called *ṭirāfī* ("extremities" or "tips" of written notes recording only the beginning and end of a *ḥadīṭ*).⁷⁶⁸ Due to the scarcity and sometimes unavailability of writing material, Jewish and Islamic students occasionally had to make their notes on walls.⁷⁶⁹ Furthermore, Islamic sources report [217] that sometimes sandals and the palms of hands were used for the purpose.⁷⁷⁰

Nevertheless, here and there, large numbers of permanent *hypomnēmata* must have been produced. On both sides, the quantity of written records produced on certain scriptural passage or traced back to a certain transmitter was expressed in a highly exaggerated manner in terms of camel loads. According to a certain *Ḥ* Zutraḥ, 400 camels were loaded with haggadic interpretations of 1 *Chronic* 8: 37 f. 9: 43 f.⁷⁷¹ In comparison, the *single* camel load of "books" by *ʿA* Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās (d. 68/687 or slightly later) deposited with Mūsā ibn ʿUqā (d. 141/758) appears positively modest.⁷⁷²

Because the words spoken by a teacher were not supposed to be written down for public use, listeners were enjoined to transmit each sentence they had heard in the name of the narrator. . . . If possible, they were also asked to provide earlier authorities who had uttered the sentence: if you can trace a chain of transmitters back to Moses, then do it.⁷⁷³

According to Horowitz, this practice of the Jewish schools in the Talmudic (Amoraeon) era is to be viewed as the model for the Islamic *ʿisnād*.⁷⁷⁴

We cannot rule out this possibility. Thanks to Juynboll's study of the Islamic tradition,⁷⁷⁵ we now know that the use of *ʿisnāds* probably emerged during second Islamic civil war (61–73/680–692). At this time, there would have been enough Jewish converts familiar with the system of authentication employed in the Talmud (which by that time had definitely been redacted in written form) which could have introduced it into Islamic transmission. It is more likely, however, that what we have here is a parallel development in both cultures. Confronted with the non-existence or unrecognized authority of written sources in a community the only possible course of action for a transmitter would be to authenticate "support" (*ʿasnaḍa* > *ʿisnād*) his material whose origin is to be demonstrated by mentioning an oral source, that is, his authority.

As Goldziher correctly pointed out,⁷⁷⁶ the opposition against the written recording of traditions developed into a lengthy, but largely theoretical, debate betw

objectors and supporters of written records. It had, however, no impact on the practice of recording in writing which became firmly established. Apparently, and conversely, no such debate ever arose on the Jewish side. One element entirely missing from the picture there is sayings *defending* the written recording of oral law. Thus, the prohibition against putting the oral Torah in writing has never been formally revoked.⁷⁷⁷ [218] Therefore, the dating of the definitive written redaction of the Mišnah and Talmud is purely speculative and remains a matter of debate for modern Jewish and Christian scholars as much as for their medieval counterparts. In the case of the Mišnah, the fundamental text of Jewish oral law, the possible chronological frame reaches from (at the latest) 200 CE to (at the earliest) c. 500 CE, a period of about 300 years.

The discussion centers on the question whether the early collections or redactions of the Mišnah by Rabbi 'Aqibah (c. 100 CE) and especially Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi (d. c. 200 CE) took written form or not. According to Lieberman,⁷⁷⁸ Rabbi 'Aqibah compiled the new Mišnah on the basis of his students' *hypomnemata*. Its "publication," however, took place in an exclusively oral form: special transmitters (the so-called *tanna'im*) recited the texts memorized in the schools. In cases of doubt about a passage, the *tanna'im* could be consulted. Thus, the new Mišnah would have been published in numerous "copies" in the form of living books. Lieberman maintains that Rabbi Yehudah followed the same procedure for his "new edition" of the Mišnah.⁷⁷⁹

According to a different account advocated by the author of the article "Mišna" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*,⁷⁸⁰ Rabbi Yehudah himself in his old age put the Mišnah into writing without, however, completely revoking the prohibition against writing down Halakōt. Oral teaching methods persisted insofar as the written Mišnah merely served as a guide for oral recitation.

Therefore, even though they were very probably produced with the help of written records,⁷⁸¹ early collections of the Mišnah were *not* written "publications." This probably only emerged with the final redaction of the Talmud (possibly around 500 CE or later; the exact date is disputed).⁷⁸² Ultimately, the taught material had grown to such proportions that publication in "book form" could no longer be delayed.⁷⁸³

We encounter a similar problem in the development of *Hadīf*. Here, our question is whether the earliest, "preclassical" *musannaf* works (collections arranged thematically into chapters), the oldest of which appeared in the middle of the second/eighth century, thus a hundred years before the canonical collections (the *Šahīḥs* [*The Sound (Collection)*] of al-Buḥārī and Muslim) already existed in writing or not. The following discussion will focus on this issue.

[219] One of the scholars credited in the *ṣawāʾil* literature (works concerned with the first persons to have done something) with the honor of being among the earliest *musannifūn* (compilers of *musannaf* collections) is the Basrian traditionist and theologian Saʿīd ibn Abī 'Arūbah (d. 156/773).⁷⁸⁴ In the Basrah of his day (and later), as in the rest of 'Irāq, scholars attached particular value to the oral "publication" of traditions. This means that the majority of Basrian scholars

recited *hadīḥs* from memory (instead of reading them out). Written records did exist, but their public use was avoided. Of Saʿīd ibn Abī 'Arūbah we learn the following: *lam yakan la-hū kitāb, ʿinna-mā kāna yaḥfaẓu*, "he did not have a book but used his memory."⁷⁸⁵ This is not a mere topos; we hear the exact opposite about other Basrian scholars such as Hammām ibn Yahyā (d. 163/780 or 164/78) who occasionally had to have a look into his book.⁷⁸⁶ Did Saʿīd actually know the entire *Musannaf* (*Systematically Arranged [Collection]*) by heart and in no other form? This is highly unlikely, given the fact that such *musannaf* collections were quite substantial compilations, as the oldest extant texts—by 'Abd ar-Razzāq al-Hammām (d. 211/827) and Ibn Abī Šaybah (d. 235/849)—show. We can even demonstrate that this was not the case: Saʿīd ibn Abī 'Arūbah is reported to have had his own scribe by the name of 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Aḥā, who accompanied him everywhere and wrote his books.⁷⁸⁷

For a long time, it was frowned upon in Basrah for scholars to use the *hypomnemata* in public and to display them as proof for their transmission. Another early compiler of a *musannaf* work, the Basrian Ma'mar ibn Rāšid (d. 154/777) settled for a time in Šan'ā and got used there to "caring for his books and consulting them"; in Yemen, recitation from memory was not especially valued. During his sojourns to his hometown Basrah, however, he felt impelled to transmit from memory.⁷⁸⁸

Similarly, the renowned Basrian *hadīf* expert Yahyā 'bn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭī (d. 197/812–813) allegedly recited from memory,⁷⁸⁹ but read out longer *hadīḥs* from the "books" of his students.⁷⁹⁰

Also in Kūfāh, the other 'Irāqī center (as well as in Medina), the transmission of traditions via memory was deemed desirable. The first Kūfān author or collection of traditions, Yahyā 'bn Zakarīyā ibn Abī Zā'idāh (d. 182/798), is reported to have transmitted from memory,⁷⁹¹ as did Wakī' ibn al-Garrāh (d. 197/812),⁷⁹² [220] who modeled his own *Musannaf* on Yahyā 'bn Zakarīyā ibn Abī Zā'idāh work.

At the beginning of several chapters of his monumental work, the Kūfān II Abī Šaybah (d. 235/849), one of the earliest *musannifūn* whose compilation has survived, writes: "This is what I know by heart from the Prophet."⁷⁹³ This peculiar phrasing only serves to show that, even at a time in which their records had grown to manuscripts comprising many volumes, certain compilers still felt compelled to present their written material in the guise of *hypomnemata*.

The abiding 'Irāqī reservation against the public consultation of *hypomnemata* by traditionists led the authors of *ṣawāʾil* works (works concerned with the first persons to have done something) explicitly to identify those scholars with whom they recited: the Basrian Rawh ibn 'Ubadāh (d. 205/820) and the Kūfān Abū Usāmah (Hammād ibn Usamah) (d. 201/817).⁷⁹⁴ Suḥyān ibn 'Uyayn (d. 198/813–814) on the other hand, confronted with the demand "Hand over your books" allegedly retorted: "I keep things much safer [in my memory] than in books."⁷⁹⁵

With the replacement of the provincial centers Basrah and Kūfah by the new center of *Hadī* studies and the sciences, the caliphal capital Baḡdād, the method of *hadī* recitation from memory was gradually abandoned. Of the most important traditionists in Baḡdād in the first half of the third/ninth century, 'Alī 'bn al-Madīnī (d. 234/849), Yahyā 'bn Ma'īn (d. 233/847), and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855), only the first—incidentally a native of Basrah—still practised it. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, on the other hand, did not think too highly of it. He said that he preferred the *hadī*s of 'Abd ar-Razzāq 'an (from) Ma'mar ibn Rāṣid, who in Yemen diligently consulted his written records (cf. p. 115), by far to the *hadī*s of those Basrians (who made mistakes by overly relying on their memory).⁷⁹⁶ Traditions which Ma'mar disseminated in Basrah, however, are said to have contained mistakes (because there he recited from memory).⁷⁹⁷

As the compiler of the *Musnad* (*The [Collection] Organized According to the Last Transmitter before the Prophet*), a multivolume *hadī* collection, Ahmad ibn Hanbal was generally very conscious of the importance of writing for his field. When one of his students remarked that "if the knowledge [sc. the tradition] had not been written down, it would have disappeared!" Ibn Hanbal replied: "Indeed. And without the written recording of traditions, what would we (traditionists) be?"⁷⁹⁸ Yahyā 'bn Ma'īn's biographers approvingly observe that he wrote and left behind numerous "books."⁷⁹⁹ [221] He is in fact regarded as the traditionist who wrote down the most *hadī*s in his time.⁸⁰⁰

Thus, the requirement to recite traditions from memory as a matter of principle was abandoned in Baḡdād as it had been abandoned earlier in scholarly centers outside 'Irāq. This development was only natural: the material in question had grown to such proportions that it was virtually impossible to deal with it by memory alone, even if it was spread over a series of lectures at regular intervals—at least not if one wanted to prevent mistakes.

II

So far, we have sidestepped what might be the most interesting question: *why* did Jewish and Islamic scholars insist for such a long time—at least in theory—on the transmission of knowledge by memory? The answer leads us back to the starting point of our discussion.

It is an established fact that, for centuries, Judaism held that only the Bible was defined as "Scripture," supplemented by the Mišnah or Talmud as oral teaching. Numerous *hadī*s—Prophetic as well as Companion and Successor traditions—attest to a parallel viewpoint in Islam: they prohibit *taqyīd al-silm*, the "shackling of knowledge," that is, the fixing of traditions in writing.

A few examples of such *hadī*s should suffice to illustrate this point. In a very well-known, relevant tradition, Abū Sa'īd al-Hudrī (d. 74/693) reports the following statement of the Prophet: "Do not write down anything on my authority except the Qur'ān; if someone has written down anything on my authority apart from Qur'ān, let him erase it!"⁸⁰¹

In an equally well-known Prophetic *hadī* reported on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (d. 58/678), we find: "Do you desire a book other than the Book of God? The peoples before you were led into error by those very books which they wrote in addition to the Book of God."⁸⁰²

Remarkably, this *hadī* alludes to the oral teaching of Judaism, which in the meantime had been put into writing.

In reaction to a request to dictate material, the Prophet's companion Abū Sa'īd al-Hudrī (d. 74/693) is said to have replied:

Do you want to adopt it as copies of the Qur'ān? Your Prophet used to instruct us orally (*kāna yuhadithu-nā*); therefore fix in your memory what you have on our authority, as we have fixed in our memory what we have on the authority of your Prophet.⁸⁰³

[222] The Successors 'Ubaydah ibn 'Amr as-Salmānī and Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd an-Najāfī are both reported to have told a student who wrote down what they recited *lā nuḥliḍanna 'an-nī kitāban*, "Do not keep for eternity what has been written down on my authority."⁸⁰⁴

In contrast to this group of traditions, there is a second group which explicitly allows writing down material. Naturally, this concession at first referred to notes serving as aides-mémoire. Occasionally, this can be inferred from a tradition wording.

Again on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (d. 58/678), we learn in another well-known tradition that the Prophet gave the following advice to a man who complained about his deficient memory: "Aid your memory with your right hand!"⁸⁰⁵ In addition, al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, the grandson of the Prophet, is said to have suggested to his children and nephews: "Learn the knowledge; but any of you incapable of transmitting it (from memory) should write it down and keep it (safe) in his house!"⁸⁰⁶

These and other traditions of this group, however, should not distract us from the fact that the refusal of written recording expressed in the other group referred explicitly to *hypomēmata*, too, because these were supposed to be erased or destroyed once they had been produced.⁸⁰⁷

Why, then, according to this view, should it be that it is only the Qur'ān that was written down, whereas traditions should only be memorized and passed on orally? Why was there to be no second written doctrine in addition to the Qur'ān? For the most part, previous attempts at explanation have kept very close to the text of the traditions: they were formulated on the basis of an interpretation of their contents. This is, understandably, especially true of the attempts of early Muslim scholars. To explain the aversion to writing down traditions, they most frequently adduced the following reasons:

1. The fear that a second book, similar to the Qur'ān, could emerge or that written *hadī*s could get mixed up with the text of the Qur'ān (especially

while the revelation was still in progress, this gave rise to corresponding Prophetic traditions).⁸⁰⁸ Thus, the tradition portrays 3 of the 5 collectors or redactors of the Qur'ānic text, Zayd ibn Ṭābit (d. 42/662–663 or some years later; Medina), 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652–653 or later; Kūfah) and Abū Mūsā al-Aṣ'arī (d. c. 42/662; Basrah), as staunch opponents of the written recording of their own traditions and dicta.⁸⁰⁹

- 2 [223] The fear that people could be distracted from the Qur'ān by the written *Hadī*. Jews and Christians had committed the sacrilege of abiding by books other than the revelation alone; and it was imperative to prevent the same fateful error.⁸¹⁰

- 3 The fear that people would rely overmuch on the written word, which was transient, at the expense of properly memorizing those words they need to take to heart.⁸¹¹

- 4 Finally, the fear that traditions could fall into the wrong hands, those of the unauthorized (*ʿilā ḡayr ʿaḥli-hī*).⁸¹² This apprehension could be the reason why several traditionists instructed their heirs to destroy their records after their death (cf. p. 113).⁸¹³

Later *Hadī* critics (Ibn Qutaybah, al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, and Ibn Ḥaḡar), for whom the written recording and codification of traditions was an established fact, tried to harmonize *hadī*s rejecting writing with those advocating it. Thus, for example, the latter group of traditions is said to have originated at a different time than the former (e.g. during periods in which revelation did not take place) or ascribed to a later stage.⁸¹⁴ By assuming that *hadī*s which viewed writing in a positive light emerged *after* those which rejected it, the apparent contradiction can be solved by positing that an earlier *sunna* (exemplary custom) was abrogated by a later one.⁸¹⁵ But it could also be argued that the Prophet permitted writing to certain people familiar with writing such as 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ,⁸¹⁶ while excluding others less competent at writing.⁸¹⁷ A further strategy for harmonization consisted of maintaining that the prohibition of writing was restricted to those people who, it was feared, were in danger of relying overmuch on written material and that writing was permitted to those who could be expected to be immune to this danger.⁸¹⁸ Finally, we find the argument that the early traditionists (Ibn 'Abbās, aṣ-Ṣa'ḡī, az-Zuhārī, Qatāḍah, etc.) were pure Arabs and, as such, were endowed with an excellent memory. The mnemonic powers of later traditionists were supposedly less well-developed, and this, together with the expansion of relevant material, made it imperative to have recourse to writing. Without writing, much of the tradition would have been lost.⁸¹⁹

Let us now return to the discussion of arguments put forward against the written recording of *Hadī*. Explanations of several modern Egyptian scholars, who have in general adhered to the arguments devised by their medieval predecessors, have been listed by Juynboll.⁸²⁰ [224] Explanations put forward by Abbott⁸²¹ and Sezgin⁸²² also tend in the same direction.

Goldzher made many attempts to understand the phenomenon. In his latest article *Kämpfe um die Stellung des Hadī im Islam* (*Contests over the Place of the Hadī in Islam*),⁸²³ he stays close to the sources. One of the motives he quotes for the rejection of writing is the concern felt by some pious believers that they might—unintentionally but still through their own fault—alter the original wording of a tradition,⁸²⁴ another the widespread opposition particularly against those *hadī*s which seemed to assume similar authority to that of the Qur'ān itself.⁸²⁵ As a third reason, he identifies the “aspect of tendency” (the suppressing of traditions inimical to one's point of view).⁸²⁶ Goldzher was very well aware⁸²⁷ that all of these arguments also refer to the oral dissemination of the *hadī*s in question, but still claims that they apply to an even larger degree to their *written* recording.

In his *Muhammadan Studies*, he attempts to explain the phenomenon at a greater distance from the sources and claims that, in the free development of the law, the old legal *ra'y* (personal opinion) schools did not want to be encumbered by too many *leges scriptae* (written, codified legal materials).⁸²⁸ In fact, we find a interestingly large number of *fuqahā* (jurisconsults) and *qadāt* (judges) among the ranks of the early opponents of a written tradition (and *ra'y*, personal [legal] opinion).⁸²⁹ Thus, if we do not generalize too much, Goldzher's observation seems not to be unfounded. On the other hand, as well as opponents, we also find advocates of the writing down of traditions among the *ʿaḥl ar-ra'y* (those in favor of personal [legal] opinion), especially from the middle of the second/eighth century on.⁸³⁰ But in later times, we must reckon more and more with the fact that scholars transmitted *Hadī* not simply to support their own position, but by diligently collecting and transmitting as much relevant material as possible irrespective of their own opinion, they also disseminated traditions contradicting their stance and also each other.

The following discussion will pose the question anew. We do not want to supplant, but to supplement earlier explanations. The main argument we will advance is inspired on the one hand by Goldzher's “aspect of tendency,” which occasionally comes to the fore in connection with the aversion to written *hadī*, and on the other by the solution scholars of Judaism have arrived at for their field in answer to the same question.

[225] In general, we find five different explanatory approaches in the field of Jewish Studies.⁸³¹ They appear, however, to be purely conjectural in the majority of cases, for it has apparently scarcely been possible to adduce direct evidence whether of a textual or another sort.

Some of the ideas less frequently put forward are:

- 1 The prohibition of writing was meant to “restrict the study of the laws to the limited circle of worthy and competent scholars.”
- 2 The prohibition of writing “had a mystic reason, as the feeling predominated that there should only be *one* written Torah.”

- 3 "It was a precaution against heretical interpolations or against the smuggling of whole treatises of a similarly questionable nature into the academies."
- 4 The reason for the prohibition of writing was "the unreliability of the written word, which is considered to be a treacherous and deceitful medium."⁸³²

As we have seen, the first two arguments were posited in this or a similar form by Islamic scholars rejecting the use of writing.⁸³³ The last item is the main argument adduced by Islamic scholars for the necessity of "heard" or "audited transmission," *ar-rivāyah al-masmū'ah*, and the dismissal of "transmission by writing alone," mostly called *kitāb(ah)*.⁸³⁴ Apparently, there is no parallel for the third point on the list.

However, the theory most frequently put forward in Jewish Studies is as follows:

- 5 According to the original intentions of the teachers of the law, oral doctrine should not be unified, definitive, and final. The prohibition of writing it down was meant to retain a certain flexibility: the opportunity to modify, accommodate, and, if necessary, to change, indeed even to abrogate certain rules.⁸³⁵

There can be no doubt that the Islamic reservation against writing was often motivated by the same point of view, even if—unsurprisingly—it was not often made explicit. Yet, we do have some evidence which clearly points in this direction.

- 1 [226] According to a report by Ibn Šihāb az-Zuhri (d. 124/742),⁸³⁶ the caliph 'Umar (r. 13–23/634–644) at one point considered having the *Sunan* ("customs," i.e. the acts and sayings of the Prophet) put into writing. However, after thinking his plan over for a while, he abandoned it.⁸³⁷ After this episode, we encounter 'Umar portrayed as an inveterate opponent not only of the written, but also of the oral dissemination of *Ḥadīṭ*. Thus, he is said to have banned the dissemination of a saying of the Prophet confirmed by numerous Companions, because this would have restricted his freedom of action in a certain matter.⁸³⁸ His extreme position condemning both the written and oral preservation and transmission of traditions was not recognized by the wider community. This form of "scripturalism" (Cook) was later held up by some extremists (a few Mu'tazilites and Hārīgites).⁸³⁹ But the majority of scholars soon adopted a position between both extremes, according to which *Ḥadīṭ* was to serve as "oral doctrine," accompanying the Qur'ān, the "written doctrine."

- 2 The Companion 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd,⁸⁴⁰ also frequently referred to as an opponent of writing down traditions, is reported once to have been told by his

son that he had recited a *ḥadīṭ* differently on an earlier occasion. Questioned as to how he came to make such a claim, his son answered: "I wrote it down (then)." Ibn Mas'ūd ordered him to produce his notebook: the *ḥadīṭ* in question had to be deleted immediately.⁸⁴¹

- 3 'Amr ibn Dīnār (d. 126/743), a Meccan legal scholar, did not tolerate his students writing down his traditions or his own legal opinions (*ra'y*). He allegedly said: "I might have changed my mind [sc. about my *ra'y*] even tomorrow."⁸⁴²

- 4 In this context, we should also quote a statement ascribed to al-Awzā'ī (d. 157/774), founder of a *madhhab* (legal school). He is reported once to have said:

This science [sc. *Ḥadīṭ*] was (once) a noble matter, when people still received it (in lessons) and memorised it with each other. But when it entered the books, it lost its shine (*dahaba nūr-u-hū*) and [227] reached people to whom it does not belong (*ilā gawr ahl-i-hī*).⁸⁴³

The metaphor "shine," which illustrates a feature of uncodified *Ḥadīṭ*, does not necessarily point to its flexibility and changeability, but it alludes to something very similar: its immediate, lively, and spontaneous character. This is exactly the difference between oral instruction from teacher to student on the one hand and learning from books on the other. In our quotation, the fact of its demise is clearly a matter of regret.⁸⁴⁴ Al-Awzā'ī's second argument ("[I] reached people to whom it did not belong") expresses another consideration voiced in Jewish Studies in answer to our question: "It [sc. the prohibition of writing] was intended to restrict the study of the laws to the limited circle of worthy and competent scholars."⁸⁴⁵

III

According to tradition, the Umayyad caliph 'Umar II (r. 99–101/717–720) ordered the first official collection (*taḍwīn*) of the *Ḥadīṭ*, "fearing the disappearance of tradition and the extinction of its carriers."⁸⁴⁶ Before him, other Umayyads had also occasionally made arrangements for the collection and writing down of tradition. Marwān I (r. 64–65/684–685)⁸⁴⁷ and especially the father of 'Umar II, 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Marwān (d. 86/705).⁸⁴⁸

After the death of 'Umar I, the situation had changed fundamentally: only a few or no Prophetic Companions were still alive to disseminate *ḥadīṭ*s embarrassing for the ruling family. On the contrary, the Umayyads could only benefit from undertaking an official edition of *Ḥadīṭ* material under their aegis. With the pious 'Umar II, it could in fact have been the case that the religious motives tradition credits him with were central.

If tradition can be relied on in this matter, 'Umar II could have played the role for *Ḥadīṭ* which his predecessor 'Utmān (r. 23–35/644–665) had played in the case of the Qur'ān.

The first scholar allegedly entrusted with this task by 'Umar II was Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥazm (d. 120/737).⁸⁴⁹ But the Medinese scholar Ibn Ṣihāb [228] az-Zuhri was said to have been the first to execute and finish the project: "The first to have collected and written down the knowledge [i.e. the tradition] (on a grand scale) is Ibn Ṣihāb (*ʿawwal man dawwana ʿl-silm wa-katāba-hū ʿbn Ṣihāb*)."⁸⁵⁰

This individual, who had a decisive influence on the written dissemination of traditions (cf. immediately below), seems to have entertained scruples about it throughout his life. This can be gathered from a number of dicta transmitted by or about him. The most important and most frequently quoted of the relevant statements of az-Zuhri is the following:

We had an aversion to writing down the knowledge [i.e. the tradition] until these rulers compelled us to do it. Now, we are of the opinion that we should not prohibit any Muslim from doing it [sc. writing down traditions] (*ḥanna nakrahu kitāb al-silm ḥattā ʿakraha-nā ʿalay-hi ḥaṭṭ-ʿl-ʿl-ummaʿ ʿa-rʿaynā ʿallā namna-ʿa-hū ʿahadan min al-muslimīn*).⁸⁵¹

FIRST EXCURSUS: *karīha ʿl-kitāb(ah)*, "he had an aversion to writing"

It is *absolutely* certain that the translation proposed above is correct, unlike that suggested by Sezgin⁸⁵²: "We had an aversion to transmitting *ḥadīṭ* by way of *kitāb* [i.e. by merely copying texts . . . without reading them out to a teacher or hearing them from him]." Admittedly, *kitāb(ah)* can, in some contexts, denote the unauthorized transmission method of copying written material, for example, in the following quote:

When ('Amr ibn Šuʿayb) transmits from his father's grandfather via his father, then this is just transmission through "books" (or notebooks; *kitāb*) and therefore weak (*ʿida ḥaddāṭa [ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb] ʿan ʿabī-hi ʿan ḡaddi-hi ʿa-huwa kitāb wa-min huwa ḡāḍa dʿfū-hū*).⁸⁵³

But that cannot be the case in the phrase *karīha ʿl-kitāb*. Here are four examples confirming that this holds true for the totality of occurrences of the phrase:

Ismāʿīl (ibn ʿUlayyah) said: "People had an aversion to writing (*karīha ʿl-kitāb*), because those who came before them [sc. the *ʿahl al-kitāb*] adhered to and admired their books; and their aversion consisted in the fact that through them [sc. the books], they could be distracted from the Qur'ān."⁸⁵⁴

Aḥmad ibn Hanbal said: "I have an aversion to writing down [sc. *ḥadīṭs*] from someone who was compliant [sc. with the authorities] during the *miḥnah*" (*ʿakrahu ʿl-kitābah ʿumman aḡāba fī ʿl-miḥnah*).⁸⁵⁵

('Alqamah ibn Waqqās) [229] said: "Do you not know that writing is disapproved (*ʿanna ʿl-kitāb yukrahu*)?" He [sc. Masruq] replied: "I do, but I only want to memorise them [sc. the traditions], then I will burn them."⁸⁵⁶

Ibrāhīm (an-Naḥāṭī) . . . had an aversion to writing *ḥadīṭs* down in notebooks (*kāna yakrahu ʿan yakṭuba ʿl-ḥadīṭ fī ʿl-karārīs*).⁸⁵⁷

In each of these four cases, it would not make any sense to translate *kitāb(ah)* as "the transmission method of copying alone." This also applies to chapter headings such as *Bāb dīkr karāḥiyat kitāb(ah) al-silm wa-taḥṭīṭi-hi fī ʿs-sūḥuf* ("The chapter mentioning the aversion to writing down knowledge and perpetuating in notebooks")⁸⁵⁸ and *Bāb mā ḡāḍa fī karāḥiyat kitāb(ah) al-silm* ("The chapter concerning what has come [down to us] concerning the aversion to the written down of knowledge"),⁸⁵⁹ because these chapters are devoted to traditions against writing, not against the transmission method of *kitābah*.

SECOND EXCURSUS: was there a *ḥadīṭ* collection by az-Zuhri, compiled at the Umayyads' behest?

Goldzihler believed that the entire body of reports concerning 'Umar II's efforts to codify the *Ḥadīṭ* should be dismissed as ahistorical. He claimed that a "venerable posterity" sought to "construe a close relation between the pious caliph and the literature of Islamic tradition."⁸⁶⁰ The tradition quoted above (on p. 122) ("these rulers" does not necessarily have to mean 'Umar II), however, probably contains an authentic core; in any case, it is comparably old: az-Zuhri's student Ma'n ibn Rašīd (d. 154/770) already quotes it verbatim in his extant *Kitāb al-ḡānīk* (*The Collection*).⁸⁶¹ It is highly unlikely for Ma'nar to have invented the tradition—say, to justify his activities as a *muṣannif* (systematic compiler)—because in that chapter entitled *Bāb kitāb al-silm* (*The Chapter on the Writing Down of Knowledge*) he lists, very much like later *muṣannifūn*, traditions for (three items) and against (four items) writing.⁸⁶² On the other hand, we cannot exclude that the obvious anti-Umayyad slant of the dictum ("these rulers forced us") is rooted in Ma'nar's own biased position vis-à-vis the Umayyads⁸⁶³ or in that of az-Zuhri himself. The decisive fact that az-Zuhri, commissioned by the Umayyads, was the first to codify traditions in writing (*taḍwīn*) on a large scale, however, remains unaffected by this detail. Since the tradition presupposes that this fact was universally known, the fact itself is not suspect.

[230] Even while az-Zuhri had no compunctions about recording a large number of *ḥadīṣ* for his private use,⁸⁶⁴ he must have regarded carrying out the caliphal commission as breaking a taboo which rested on the decades-old consensus which restricted an official edition exclusively to the "Book," the Qur'ān, and to the exclusion of the "oral teaching," the *Ḥadīṭ*. He could even have disseminated the abovementioned tradition (p. 120) according to which 'Umar I abandoned his plan for a redaction of traditions, in the hope of dissuading his patron from implementing that very plan.

After the collection's completion, 'Umar II is said to have asked az-Zuhri to make a number of copies of it in the form of notebooks. These were then to be distributed severally, so the story goes, to each province of the state.⁸⁶⁵ The historicity of this report, which has obviously been modelled on 'Umayyad's similar procedure following the conclusion of the redaction of the Qur'ān, is highly dubious. It is in fact more likely that az-Zuhri's collection was only undertaken or at least finished after the death of 'Umar II (cf. immediately below).

Az-Zuhri himself also made "public" his collected material, while working as tutor of the princes under the caliph Ḥiṣām (r. 105–125/724–743). Like his written edition of the tradition, these activities also gnawed at his conscience. He is alleged to have said later:

The rulers had me write (it) down [sc. the tradition] (*istakaba-ni*). Then, I made them [sc. the princes] write it down (*fa-ʾaktubu-hum*). Now that they have written it [sc. the tradition] down, I am ashamed before God not to write it down for others.⁸⁶⁶

At all events, writing down traditions, even for public use, could not henceforth be considered prohibited any more in az-Zuhri's circles and probably in Syria in general. One student reports: "We did not seek to write down from az-Zuhri until Ḥiṣām compelled him (to). He then wrote down (*ḥadīṣ*) for his [sc. Ḥiṣām's] sons. And now, people (in general) write down the *Ḥadīṭ*."⁸⁶⁷ But the pressure applied to him by the authorities was not the only argument az-Zuhri used to justify what must have seemed unheard of even to himself, namely the official written edition and dissemination of the *Ḥadīṭ*. He is said to have also given the following reason: "Had it not been for the *ḥadīṣ* coming to us from the East, which we do not recognise and reject, I would not have written down *Ḥadīṭ* and would not have permitted others to do so."⁸⁶⁸

His statement illustrates the antagonism between East [231] and West, that is, between 'Irāq and Syria, which will be our focus in the next section.

IV

If even az-Zuhri, supporter and friend of the Umayyads, at first resisted the idea of an official redaction of *Ḥadīṭ*, how much more virulent must opposition

against it have been outside Syria, seat of Umayyad power, especially in anti-Umayyad 'Irāq. However, we do not appear to find any direct, explicit attacks on it. Resistance seems to have taken a more indirect approach. Two methods can be distinguished.

The first one was that a growing number of *ḥadīṣ* against the written recording of traditions was put into circulation. A preliminary discussion of the issue might have occurred in the first century AH, but on the basis of an analysis of the *isnāds* of the relevant traditions according to the method of Schacht and Juynboll, which aims to identify the most recent *common* transmitter (common link, CL) who disseminated (but in my opinion not necessarily invented) the *ḥadīṭ* in question, we can clearly demonstrate that the debate came into full swing only around the turn of the first to the second century AH (i.e. c. 720, the year of 'Umar II's death) and lasted for several decades. In addition, we can show that the majority (but not all) of the most recent *common* transmitters who took a *negative* stance towards writing hailed largely, though not exclusively, from Basrah, Kūfah, and Medina. The traditions ascribed to Companions (and probably also those ascribed to Successors) are obviously older than those ascribed to the Prophet. Suffice it to quote two examples from the first group: the Basrian Abū Naḍrah (al-Mundir ibn Mālik, d. c. 109/727)⁸⁶⁹ transmitted, on the authority of his immediate informant Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥudrī, the *ḥadīṭ* "Do you want to adopt it [sc. this material] as copies of the Qur'ān?"⁸⁷⁰ His Kūfān contemporary, the *qāḍī* (judge) Abū Burdah (d. 104/722),⁸⁷¹ disseminated, on the authority of his father Abū Mūsā al-Aṣ'ān, the *ḥadīṭ* "I wrote down many 'books' from my father, but he erased them."⁸⁷²

The Prophetic traditions against writing down the *Ḥadīṭ*, four in all, seem to go back to the following most recent *common* transmitters:

- 1 the Basrian Hammām ibn Yahyā (d. 163/780 or 164/781)⁸⁷³;
- 2 the Kūfān Suḥyān ibn 'Uyaynah (d. 198/813–814),⁸⁷⁴ who later moved to Mecca;
- 3 the Medinese [232] 'Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam (d. 182/798)⁸⁷⁵;
- 4 the Medinese Kaḥr ibn Zayd al-Aslamī (d. 158/775).⁸⁷⁶

In all likelihood, the first three instances can be traced back to one and the same *ḥadīṭ*, which was disseminated in different forms by the transmitters listed above. Its respective *isnāds* start with the Prophet > Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥudrī > 'Atā ibn Yāsār > Zayd ibn Aslam (Figures I.1 and I.2) or the Prophet > Abū Hurayrah > 'Atā ibn Yāsār > Zayd ibn Aslam (Figure I.3). Thus, those termed most recent *common* transmitters (CL) above become most recent common transmitters of the second degree (*partial common links*, PCL according to Juynboll's terminology). The actual most recent common transmitter (CL) turns out therefore to be the Medinese *faqīh* (jurisconsult) Zayd ibn Aslam (d. 136/753).⁸⁷⁷ His widely recognized habit of introducing his own *ra'y* (personal [legal] opinion) in his Qur'ānic exegesis was controversial.⁸⁷⁸ After this operation, we are left with two Prophetic *ḥadīṣ*

against writing down traditions (Figures 1.1–3 and Figure 1.4), which were put into circulation in Medina at about the middle of the second/eighth century. In addition to being “distributed” again in Medina a generation later, one of these traditions was “exported” to Basrah and Mecca in slightly divergent versions and disseminated further from there.⁸⁷⁹

The second form of opposition to the *Hadīṭ* redaction ordered by the Umayyads consisted in putting additional emphasis on transmission from memory. Scholars from ‘Irāq centers of learning were the most zealous advocates of this practice. In a different context,⁸⁸⁰ we have already listed examples of Basrian *Hadīṭ* critics defending transmission from memory and of Basrian and Kūfian *muṣannifūn* (systematic compilers) reciting their works without a “book.” We will add a few more examples below. Primarily, they indicate that early Islamic scholars themselves drew a connection between the practice of memorizing *hadīṭ*s and traditionists hailing from ‘Irāq cities.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal calls the preservation of traditions in memory “the Basrian *maḏhab*” (method)⁸⁸¹ and reports how a Basrian traditionist and theologian, Ibn ‘Ulayyah (d. 194/809–810),⁸⁸² [233] became enraged about a Meccan Prophetic tradition approving of writing down traditions which had been disseminated by ‘Amr ibn Šu‘ayb.⁸⁸³ The blind scholar Qatāḏah ibn Dī‘āmah (d. 117/735),⁸⁸⁴ also from Basrah, is referred to by Ahmad ibn Hanbal as having “a better memory than the people of Basrah” (*ahfāz min ‘ahl al-Basrah*).⁸⁸⁵ As we have already seen above,⁸⁸⁶ it was also Ahmad ibn Hanbal who observed that he preferred the *hadīṭ*s from ‘Abd ar-Razzāq on the authority of Ma‘mar to the *hadīṭ*s from those Basrians (because they made mistakes by overreliance on their memory).

The Kūfian *Hadīṭ* “keepers” (*huffāz al-Kūfīyīn li-‘l-hadīṭ*) were also well-known.⁸⁸⁷ One of them, al-A‘maš (d. 148/765), was highly regarded in his time as the traditionist of the people of Kūfah. It goes without saying that “he did not have a book” (*kāna muḥadīṭ-ahl al-Kūfah fī zamāni-hī wa-lam yaktun la-hu kitāb*, “he was the traditionist of the people of Kūfah in his day but he did not have a book”). In addition, he was considered to be “the most excellent Qur’ān reader and the best ‘keeper’ of the *Hadīṭ*” of his circle (*kāna ‘aqra-a-hum li-‘l-Qur’ān wa-ahfaza-hum li-‘l-hadīṭ*).⁸⁸⁸

One of the reasons for the particularly aggressive rejection which the written recording of traditions met in ‘Irāq might be sought in the opposition of the anti-Umayyad cities Basrah, Kūfah, and Medina to the Umayyad capital Damascus. Outside Syria, people were not always prepared to accept *hadīṭ*s codified and disseminated under Umayyad control. Even az-Zuhri was rumored to have occasionally bowed to Umayyad pressure and sanctioned traditions which were advantageous to the rulers.⁸⁸⁹

Perhaps people also feared that in a time of factional strife, in which the Muslim community was about to disintegrate into numerous sects and theological factions, they were in danger of destroying the unity of Islam forever by allowing each and every religious and political grouping, indeed even every single scholar, to follow

the Umayyad example and start to spread their own *hadīṭ* collections in written form. With a flexible “oral teaching,” the danger of providing a rallying point for schismatic movements was significantly smaller. As long as this teaching was not codified, scholars could maintain the illusion that, in the final consequence, tradition was—just like the Qur’ān, the “written teaching”—still “one.”

The following argument could also have bolstered the case against the written recording of traditions: Basrian traditionists, who frequently were also theologians mostly of Qadartite persuasion (e.g. Ibn ‘Ulayyah and Sa‘īd ibn Abī ‘Arūbah), were accustomed to, and valued applying, a flexible “oral doctrine” in their discussion [234] Similar circumstances could have prevailed with scholars in the towns of Kūfah and Medina, which were strongly influenced by Šī‘ite factions. Compared to a (second) written doctrine, an oral teaching had several advantages for defending one’s own position and refuting the views of one’s opponent. The Qur’ān sufficed as a “written teaching”; its text was fixed and its preservation and transmission was controlled by a specialized scholarly caste, the *qurrān* (Qur’ān readers). All that could be done was to interpret the immutable text. An exclusively orally preserved teaching, however, could easily be manipulated by way of additions, deletion, tendentious alterations and distortions, and, last but not least, the outright forgetting of *hadīṭ*s. Studies by J. van Ess⁸⁹⁰ and M. Cook⁸⁹¹ have demonstrated not only *that* it happened but *how*. The desire for flexibility certainly played a role in the continued efforts scholars went to to preserve the *Hadīṭ* as an exclusively oral teaching. In its last phase, however, the transmission of tradition from memory seems to have been pursued as a sport rather than a serious business, especially in Basrah.

What, then, about the proponents of the written recording of traditions? A analysis of the *ṣiṣnāḏ*s of relevant traditions shows that dicta in favor of writing may have been spread as early as the first century AH. On numerous occasions, we encounter the name of the Meccan Companion ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ā‘ (d. 65/684).⁸⁹² Sometimes, he is listed as the original informant⁸⁹³; sometimes he and his readiness to write are the subject of the tradition.⁸⁹⁴ In one case, he might even be the original informant and the most recent CL at one and the same time.⁸⁹⁵ ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr possessed a *ṣahīfah*, a notebook, which he used to record traditions of the Prophet and the Companions. He did not keep this notebook secret, but, contrary to the customary practice of other scholars with their notes, boasted in public of this *ṣahīfah*, probably the most famous of its kind, going so far as to give it its own name, *as-ṣādiqah*, “the truthful.” It became the subject of a frequently quoted tradition⁸⁹⁶ reported on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh himself as the original transmitter. This notebook was subsequently handed down in ‘Abd Allāh’s family from father to son. We will hear of it again later.

[235] In spite of this early example, the dissemination of *hadīṭ*s advocating the written recording of traditions took place mainly during the second/eighth century. Most of these *hadīṭ*s only branch out during this time and those which could branch out anew (so-called PCLs, according to Junybol’s terminology). We

find the name of the Meccan scholar 'Amr ibn Ṣu'ayb (d. 118/736),⁸⁹⁷ either as most recent common transmitter (CL) or as most recent transmitter of the second degree (PCL).⁸⁹⁸ He is none other than 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr's great-grandson, who had inherited his *ṣahīfah* and was occasionally accused of merely having "found" it without having "heard" it from his father.⁸⁹⁹

While native *hadī* critics associate the memorization of *hadī* with 'Irāqīs, especially Basrians,⁹⁰⁰ the use of "found" *ṣahīfahs*, to which, naturally, the opponents of written recording strongly objected, was associated with "Syria"⁹⁰¹ or with "Mecca or Yemen."⁹⁰²

In Mecca, Muḡāhid (d. 104/722)⁹⁰³ was, among others, a prominent advocate of the written recording of the *Hadī*. He is said to have given his *hypomnemata* (*kitāb*) to his students for copying.⁹⁰⁴ One generation later, the Meccan Ibn Ḡurayḡ (d. 150/767),⁹⁰⁵ who is, together with Sa'īd ibn Abī 'Arūbah,⁹⁰⁶ reported to be one of the earliest authors of *muṣannaḡ* works,⁹⁰⁷ proudly claimed: "No one has collected and written down Tradition as I have" (*mā dawwana 'l-ilm tadwīn-ṭahad*).⁹⁰⁸ This happened at about the time when Sa'īd ibn Abī 'Arūbah was commended in Baṣrah for not having possessed a book.

However, opponents of written recording could of course be found in Mecca. Its advocates never closed ranks as did the exponents of oral transmission in Baṣrah for a long time. The most famous Meccan to plead the case for oral transmission is 'Amr ibn Dīnār (d. 126/743).⁹⁰⁹ 'Alī 'bn al-Madīnī considers him to be one of the six most prominent *Hadī* "keepers" (*ḥafīẓ*) of Muhammad's community (among the other five, we find two Basrians, two Kūfāns, and the Medinese az-Zuhri).⁹¹⁰ Still, 'Amr ibn Dīnār is reported⁹¹¹ to have permitted his student Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah to write down *ṭahad* (beginnings and ends of a *hadī*).⁹¹²

The writing down of traditions seems to have met the least opposition in Yemen. The Yemeni [236] Hammām ibn Munabbih (d. c. 101/719)⁹¹³ is the author of a *ṣahīfah* which, in a later transmission, survived and was edited.⁹¹⁴ According to reports, he allegedly bought "the books"⁹¹⁵ for his brother Vahb⁹¹⁶—showing how little value they attached to "heard" transmission. We have already seen above⁹¹⁷ in the case of Hammām ibn Munabbih's student Ma'mar ibn Rāṣid that recitation from memory was not practised in Yemen.

Now, how do these findings fit into the picture developed so far? First, we notice that the opposition to the codification of the *Hadī* was weaker in urban centers farther removed from Syria such as Mecca and Ṣan'ā' than in 'Irāq or Medina. Public use of a *ṣahīfah* (notebook) seems to have been a sort of custom in Mecca and the Yemen. Given that 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Ās actually disseminated the *hadī* discussed above (Figure III.1), his stance could be interpreted as evidence for sporadic opposition occurring as early as the first century AH to the general scholarly consensus of the period that the *Hadī* was to be considered as oral teaching, only to be recorded (if at all) in *hypomnemata* (preferably kept private).

The defense of written recording by way of suitable *hadī*s in the second century AH seems to have been, at least in part, more of a reaction against the 'Irāqīs and Medinese aversion to writing rather than conscious support for Umayyad efforts to codify the *Hadī*. Among the protagonists, we find several owners of written records, who, as was the case with 'Amr ibn Ṣu'ayb, regarded the *ṣahīfah* as a precious heirloom and thus joined the ranks of the defenders of writing as a matter of course. As we have seen in the case of Ibn 'Ulayyah,⁹¹⁸ the activities of the pro-writing faction could in turn lead to a counter-reaction by some Basrians.

The advocates of written recording of the second century AH do not appear to belong to one particular "ideological" group. Rather, they were probably pragmatists, who refused to take part in the game of transmission from memory, either because they possessed a precious *ṣahīfah*, had a bad memory, or for some other reason. With their stance against memorizing, they are predecessors of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who often commented on the questionableness of this method of transmission.⁹¹⁹ From about the middle of the second century AH, we also find 'Irāqīs among their ranks, who, as the most recent common transmitter, spread traditions supporting written recording. For example, the Basrian al-Ḥaṣīb ibn Ḡabdh (d. 146/763 or earlier)⁹²⁰ circulated the Prophetic *hadī* according to which the Prophet is said to have advised a man who complained about his bad memory [237] "Aid your memory with your right hand!"⁹²¹ *Hadī* scholars suspected him of having forged the tradition and generally consider him to be a liar.⁹²² It is quite conceivable that in a place as inveterately opposed to it as Baṣrah, his advocacy writing down traditions, based on a Prophetic *hadī*, might have been one reason for his bad reputation.

Five *hadī*s contain the following phrase: "Shackle the knowledge" (*qayyid 'l-ilm*), that is, write down the traditions. This slogan is ascribed to the Prophet,⁹²³ 'Alī,⁹²⁴ 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās,⁹²⁵ Anas ibn Mālīk,⁹²⁶ and even 'Umar.⁹²⁷ The subsequent development in the third/ninth century shows that traditions were in fact finally "shackled," that is, put into a fixed written form and redacted. As was the case in Judaism, oral teaching became a second written teaching which enjoyed the same or almost the same respect as the original written teaching.⁹²⁸

Still, it would be wrong to assume that the advocates of written recording completely won the day. One aspect of oral transmission championed for such a long time was not discarded in the third/ninth century or later: the ideal of an "audite transmission," "heard" in the teacher's lecture (*ṣamā'*). Transmission by way of "mere copying" of written material, *kitāb* (*ah*), was still regarded as weak and was to be avoided wherever possible.⁹²⁹ Even the canonical *Hadī* compilations of al-Buḥārī, Muslim, and others were in principle to be received, if at all possible, by way of *ṣamā'*.⁹³⁰ even though, in practice, only few scholars were able to hear these monumental works in their entirety in the lectures of their authors or their authorized transmitters.⁹³¹

[244] The diagrams show the most important of the *ʿisnāds* (chains of authorities) discussed in this chapter, analyzed according to the method developed by Schacht and Juynboll. I am calling this method of *ʿisnād* analysis by this name because it was originally developed by J. Schacht in his book *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*⁹³² and subsequently revised and refined by G. H. A. Juynboll in his *Muslim Tradition*⁹³³ and other publications on the subject. It should be noted that other scholars such as J. van Ess and H. Motzki have also employed this method very fruitfully and have developed it further.

The starting point of an *ʿisnād* analysis according to this method is an individual *ḥadīṭ*. As far as possible, *all* the extant *ʿisnāds* for the tradition in question are collected, compared, and charted in a diagram. In conformity with Juynboll's approach, the Prophet or the oldest/original transmitter is recorded at the bottom of the diagram, followed by an ascending line of subsequent transmitters. The direction of transmission is indicated with lines. Dotted lines denote paths of transmission which are in doubt or rarely attested. For Prophetic *ḥadīṭs*, we frequently find that the first three or four transmitters following the Prophet are identical in all the (otherwise different) *ʿisnāds* and that the *ʿisnād* then branches out. Thus, our diagrams assume the form of a tree. Companion *ḥadīṭs* often branch out earlier. Schacht and Juynboll use the term common link (CL) for those transmitters after whom the *ʿisnād* branches out: they are the most recent common transmitters of the tradition. According to Schacht, the CL indicates the earliest point in time after which the tradition was spread. Juynboll designates later branching points of the *ʿisnād* (in the tree diagram) as partial common link (PCL). The corresponding transmitters are responsible for the further dissemination and sometimes for new formulations of a tradition.

This method of *ʿisnād* analysis is not to be confused with another approach, namely that of F. Sezgin.⁹³⁴ The starting point for this different method, which was applied in a similar form by H. Horsk, 935 L. Zolondek, 936 and M. Fleischhammer, 937 is not an individual *ḥadīṭ* or a single historical report (*ḥabar*), but an entire compilatory work such as al-Buhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* (*The Sound [Collection]*) or at-Ṭabarī's *Tarīḥ* (*History*). It aims to identify the direct sources of the work in question.

To this end, the *ʿisnāds* occurring in the work are collected and recorded on index cards. These are then arranged according to the *most recent* transmitter (i.e. the direct informant, teacher, or *ṣaḥābī* of the compiler). Starting with the most recent transmitter of a group, branching points are identified. They indicate the direct source (which, according to Sezgin, was invariably written) of the compiler (it might be preferable to [245] apply to these "direct sources" Zolondek's term "collector source"). On the other hand, those transmitters that do not mark a branching point in the *ʿisnād* are "mere transmitters" of these sources.

Diagram I, 1-3

"Do not write down anything on my authority except the Qur'ān."

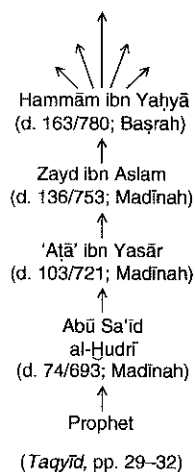


Figure I.1

"The Prophet did not permit me to do it."

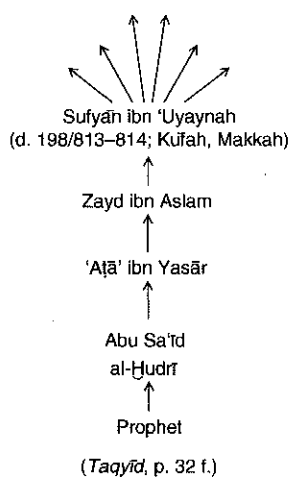


Figure I.2

"Do you desire a book other than the Book of God?"

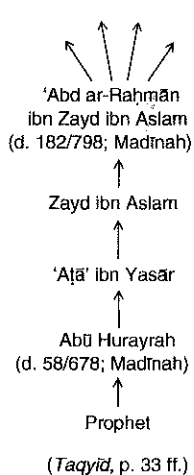


Figure I.3

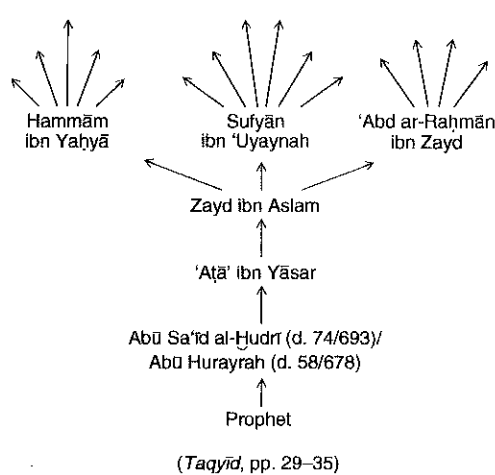


Figure I.1/2/3

None of the *Prophetic hadīṭs* rejecting the written recording of traditions (seen in Figures I.1–I.4; these are all we have) can be found in the following precanonized (=“old”) *hadīṭ* compilations, which include a chapter entitled *Fi karāḥiyat kitāb al-ilm* (*On the Aversion to the Writing Down of Knowledge*) or a similar heading: the *Kitāb al-ḡāmī* (*The Collection*) by Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid (d. 153/770); Abū Ḥaytamah’s (d. 234/848) *Kitāb al-ilm* (*The Book of Knowledge*), and the *Musnaḥ* (*The Systematically Arranged [Collection]*) of Ibn Abī Saybah (d. 235/849). Likewise, they do not occur in al-Buḥārī (d. 256/870). However, Muslim (d. 261/875) already knows the *hadīṭ* in Figure I.1.⁹³⁸ Abū Dawūd (d. 275/888) quotes the *hadīṭ* of Figure I.4⁹³⁹ and al-Tirmidī (d. 279/892) that in Figures I.1 and I.2.⁹⁴⁰ (I have not consulted the remaining canonical compilations.) We have already noted (on p. 125) that the *hadīṭ* of Figure I.1/2/3 consists of variants of one and the same tradition. In the case of the *hadīṭ* of Figures I.1 and I.2, al-Tirmidī already noticed and explicitly recorded this fact. Apparently, aḍ-Ḍahabī arrived at the same result for the *hadīṭ* of Figures I.2 and I.3: in his *Mizān*-article on ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam,⁹⁴¹ which includes several traditions put in circulation by ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, he first refers to the *isnād* in Figure I.2 and names Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah as the most recent transmitter (he is the CL in the *isnād* of Figure I.2). Then, he quotes the *isnād* in Figure I.3 (CL: ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Zayd), but qualifies it as *munkar* (“rejected”, unrecognized). Apparently, aḍ-Ḍahabī has here recognized the (P)CL phenomenon!

However, the *hadīṭ* in Figure I.1/2/3 is hardly an outright forgery, but rather a “backward projection” (*rafʿ*; literally: “raising”) of a possibly authentic, but at least old dictum ascribed to Abū Sa‘īd al-Ḥudrī (cf. Figure II.1) to the Prophet. This was already assumed by medieval traditionists, most prominently al-Buḥārī.⁹⁴² In fact, both traditions have a similar content. The transference might have been aided by the fact that, in the *isnād* in Figure II.1, Abū Sa‘īd explicitly refers to the Prophet: “do therefore preserve in memory (also) on our authority, as we have preserved in memory on the authority of your Prophet.” The reference could easily give rise to the quotation. In all likelihood, Zayd ibn Aslam (the CL in the *isnād* of Figure I.1/2/3) was responsible for the backward projection (‘Aṭā’ ibn Yāsār, from whom Zayd ibn Aslam—genuinely or allegedly—transmitted, would be a far less likely candidate). In any case, Zayd ibn Aslam’s transmitters (Hammām ibn Yahyā, Ibn ‘Uyaynah and ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Zayd) must have received the tradition already in its “Prophetic” guise from Zayd, since their versions share this characteristic. As the respective PCLs, they are responsible for the wording of the individual versions: Hammām ibn Yahyā for the *hadīṭ* of Figure I.1; Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah for the *hadīṭ* of Figure I.2; and ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam for that of Figure I.3.

The most problematic of these versions is the *isnād* of Figure I.3 with the “false” original transmitter Abū Hurayrah. As we have seen above, it was already classified by ad-Dahabī as “unrecognized” (*munkar*). Interestingly, we find this version of the *hadīṭ* in Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnaḥ* (*The [Collection] Organized According to the Last Transmitter before the Prophet*)⁹⁴³ as part of the chapter

(*musnaḥ*) on Abū Sa‘īd al-Ḥudrī, even though the original [246] transmitter listed in his *isnād* is Abū Hurayrah and not Abū Sa‘īd.⁹⁴⁴ For the version in Figure I.2, al-Ḥaṭṭāb al-Baḡdādī quotes—inadvertently or as a result of contamination by the *isnād* of Figure I.3—the following transmitters (from the CL): Ibn ‘Uyaynah (the CL) ‘an ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam ‘an ‘aḍī-hi etc. With al-Tirmidī⁹⁴⁵ and ad-Dārimī,⁹⁴⁶ I would prefer to read: Ibn ‘Uyaynah ‘an Zayd ibn Aslam etc.

With the *hadīṭ* in Figure I.4, we seem to have another case of a backward projection to the Prophet, this time of a dictum by Zayd ibn Ṭābit. There is a similar tradition with a different *isnād*, traced back to Zayd himself, in which he (in a similar situation) rejected the written recording of his own words.⁹⁴⁸ In all likelihood, the backward projection goes back to the CL, the Medinese Kaṭīr ibn Zayd al-Aslamī. Again, it was aḍ-Ḍahabī who noticed that Kaṭīr set the tradition in circulation in *this form*; he quotes the text in his article on Kaṭīr ibn Zayd in his *Mizān* (*Scales*).⁹⁴⁹ In this case as well, aḍ-Ḍahabī seems to have recognized the CL phenomenon.

The *hadīṭ* in Figure II.1 can be found in two “old” compilations: that of Abū Ḥaytamah⁹⁵⁰ and that of Ibn Abī Saybah.⁹⁵¹ It might possibly be authentic, but it is certainly old: if it did not originate with Abū Sa‘īd al-Ḥudrī, it must have been ascribed to him at the latest by the transmitter immediately following him, the Basran Abū Naḍraḥ (d. c. 109/727). This much we can see from the diagram: Abū Naḍraḥ is clearly the CL of the tradition, followed by three PCLs.

Incidentally, Abū Sa‘īd al-Ḥudrī is credited with a third tradition against writing, which is reported with a different *isnād*.⁹⁵² It is, therefore, a distinct possibility that he himself (and not Abū Naḍraḥ) had already spread the idea that people were not supposed to write down traditions.

Like the *hadīṭ* in Figure II.1, we also find the *hadīṭ* in Figure II.2 in the “old” compilations of Abū Ḥaytamah⁹⁵³ and Ibn Abī Saybah.⁹⁵⁴ Like the former, it is one of the most frequently quoted and important *hadīṭs* against writing down tradition and also possibly authentic, but at least old: if it did not come from Abū Mūsā al-Aṣ‘arī, it must have been ascribed to him by his son Abū Burdah in Kūfah—a we can see from the diagram, which shows Abū Burdah as the tradition’s CL with several PCLs.

In sum, we have established a number of positive results from our analysis of *hadīṭs* against the written recording of traditions:

- 1 In all likelihood, the Prophet himself never made a statement to this effect.
- 2 It cannot be ruled out that the prohibition was already pronounced in the first/seventh century by some Medinese Companions.
- 3 The prohibition was definitely disseminated and advocated during the first generation of Successors (first quarter of the second/eighth century) particularly in Basrah and Kūfah.
- 4 During the second generation of Successors (second quarter of the second/eighth century) in Medina, it was projected backwards to the Prophet

[247] Of the *hadīṭ*s listed here which approve of written recording, we find the following in the "old" compilations: that of Figure III.1 in Ibn Abī Šaybah's *Muṣannaf*⁹⁵⁵ and that of Figure IV.1 in the *Ġamīʿ* of Maʿmar ibn Rāšid.⁹⁵⁶ The four canonical compilations I have consulted contain the following traditions: that of Figure III.1 in Abū Dāwūd,⁹⁵⁷ that of Figure IV.1 in al-Buḥārī⁹⁵⁸ and al-Tirmidī.⁹⁵⁹

In the case of the anti-writing *hadīṭ*s, the diagrams all take the form of a tree: in Prophetic traditions, the usual sequence is Prophet—Companion—Successor—(Successor)—CL; in the Companion *hadīṭ*s discussed, Companion—Successor—(Successor)—CL. The *isnād* structures of traditions endorsing writing are much more difficult to assess. At least at first glance, none of them display the tree form. But it might be possible through interpretation to reduce those in Figures III.1, III.2, and IV.2 to a tree structure.

Figure III.1 comes close to this form: at any rate, in the usual place, it has an obvious CL, 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb, followed by several PCLs. It is therefore certain that 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb disseminated the *hadīṭ*. However, it is equally plausible that the original transmitter, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr, had already disseminated it himself, because the *isnād* branches out after him. Still, most of the lines of transmission radiating from 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr (except for that between him and 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb) are rarely attested and some of the scholars who people them are obscure. Thus, we can consider them *inauthentic* and ignore them. This does not necessarily apply to the line Yūsuf ibn Māhāk *ʿan* 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr with the CL (or PCL) Yaḥyā *ʿbn* Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, attested by Ibn Abī Šaybah⁹⁶⁰ and Abū Dāwūd.⁹⁶¹ To me, it seems rather unlikely (but not impossible) that Yaḥyā *ʿbn* Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān (as CL or PCL) invented this *isnād*, perhaps to replace the "weak" (because it involves "merely written" transmission) *isnād* 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb *ʿan* ʿabī-*hi* ("on the authority of his father") and so on with a "better" line of transmitters (because it involves purely "heard"/"audited" transmission). A key argument against such a supposition would be the fact that the tradition's content was probably not very much to the liking of Yaḥyā, a Basrian scholar wary of written transmission. It would be highly improbable for him to "improve" the *hadīṭ* by providing it with a "better" *isnād* of his own invention. The following explanation is in my opinion more likely: 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Aḥnas, the teacher of Yaḥyā,⁹⁶² who claimed to have received the tradition from al-Walīd ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Muḡīṭ,⁹⁶³ was himself a student of 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb.⁹⁶⁴ Native *Hadīṭ* criticism already charges him with numerous faults in transmission.⁹⁶⁵ Therefore, it is quite conceivable that for this *hadīṭ*, he either inadvertently or intentionally named Walīd ibn 'Abd Allāh, another of his teachers, instead of the correct transmitter 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb. [248] If that were the case, we would have almost restored the tree structure. The only remaining task would be to delete the rarely attested transmission line leading through 'Aḡā *ʿbn* Abī Rabāḥ to Ibn Ḡurayḡ, which is apparently only known to Ibn Ḡurayḡ. It clearly merits less confidence than the well-attested and indubitably historical line Ibn Ḡurayḡ *ʿan* ("on the authority of") 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb. If we follow this reconstruction and argue that the *hadīṭ* was initially disseminated by 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb (as the CL), another question suggests itself: did 'Amr project backwards

to the Prophet a tradition which was originally attributed to, and ended with, or was narrated about, his great-grandfather 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr (probably the one in Figure IV.1, which 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb had in his repertoire anyway), by appending the unverifiable *isnād* "from my father, from his grandfather" to it?⁹⁶⁶ In favor of this hypothesis, we could argue that 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb consistently preferred the Prophet as a source for legal knowledge.⁹⁶⁷

In conclusion, it should be stressed that these considerations are purely hypothetical. We are unable on the basis of *isnād* analysis alone to exclude the possibility that the *hadīṭ* was already disseminated in the first/seventh century by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr.

The case of *hadīṭ* of Figure III.2 is less complicated. Its text is nothing more than a variant, more exactly an updated variant, of the wording of Figure III.1. 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muʿammal, who received the tradition from 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb, is responsible for this intervention.⁹⁶⁸ He simply substituted the older phrase "Yes, write (it) down!" with the slogan "Shackle the knowledge" (cf. p. 129). It is therefore not an outright forgery, but a special case of *ar-rīwāyah bi-l-maʿnā* (non-literal transmission). The two transmission lines which do *not* pass through 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr are suspect: compare the discussion of Figure III.1 on the line Ibn Ḡurayḡ *ʿan* 'Aḡā *ʿbn* Abī Rabāḥ *ʿan* 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr. Our only witness for the line Ibn Abī Muḡaykah *ʿan* 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr is Ibn al-Muʿammal, and is most likely spurious. Perhaps Ibn al-Muʿammal wanted to support his "updated" version with the additional *isnāds*. If our considerations so far are correct—which in this case is highly likely—we would have restored the customary tree structure also for this tradition: its CL would be 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb; 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muʿammal, its PCL.

Of the two Companion *hadīṭ*s backing written recording which we have mapped in the earlier diagrams, that of Figure IV.1 is undoubtedly old: it is quoted in Maʿmar's *Ġamīʿ* (*Collection*).⁹⁶⁹ Maʿmar transmits it directly from his teacher Hammām ibn Munabbih. If it did not originate from Abū Hurayrah, it must have been ascribed to him only a generation later. As depicted in the diagram, it has *two* CLs or (if we accept the supposed original transmitter Abū Hurayrah as the CL) PCLs: Hammām ibn Munabbih and 'Amr ibn Šuʿayb. The latter in turn received it from Abū Hurayrah through two lines of transmitters: Muḡāhid and al-Muḡīrah ibn Ḥakīm.

The *hadīṭ* in Figure IV.2 has a clear CL (with two PCLs): Muḡāhid. Thus, he must have disseminated the *hadīṭ* at the beginning of the second/eighth century, if not earlier. The other lines [249] emanating from the (alleged) original transmitter, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr, are either rarely attested (e.g. Abū Rāšid al-Ḥubārī *ʿan* 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr) or are based solely on the testimony of a single transmitter (e.g. Layl *ʿan* Ṭāwūs *ʿan* 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr; Ṭāwūs is only attested by Layl, who in turn received the tradition in a secure connection from Muḡāhid).

To sum up and conclude our discussion, we can state the following: it is certain that, already at the beginning of the second/eighth century, traditions well disposed

[247] Of the *hadīṭ*s listed here which approve of written recording, we find the following in the "old" compilations: that of Figure III.1 in Ibn Abī Šaybah's *Muṣannaf*⁹⁵⁵ and that of Figure IV.1 in the *Ġāmiʿ* of Maʿmar ibn Rāšid.⁹⁵⁶ The four canonical compilations I have consulted contain the following traditions: that of Figure III.1 in Abū Dāwūd,⁹⁵⁷ that of Figure IV.1 in al-Buḥārī⁹⁵⁸ and al-Tirmidī.⁹⁵⁹

In the case of the anti-writing *hadīṭ*s, the diagrams all take the form of a tree: in Prophetic traditions, the usual sequence is Prophet—Companion—Successor—(Successor)—CL; in the Companion *hadīṭ*s discussed, Companion—Successor—(Successor)—CL. The *isnād* structures of traditions endorsing writing are much more difficult to assess. At least at first glance, none of them display the tree form. But it might be possible through interpretation to reduce those in Figures III.1, III.2, and IV.2 to a tree structure.

Figure III.1 comes close to this form: at any rate, in the usual place, it has an obvious CL, ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb, followed by several PCLs. It is therefore certain that ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb disseminated the *hadīṭ*. However, it is equally plausible that the original transmitter, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr, had already disseminated it himself, because the *isnād* branches out after him. Still, most of the lines of transmission radiating from ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr (except for that between him and ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb) are rarely attested and some of the scholars who people them are obscure. Thus, we can consider them *inauthentic* and ignore them. This does not necessarily apply to the line Yūsuf ibn Mānak *can* ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr with the CL (or PCL) Yahyā ʿbn Saʿīd al-Qaṭān, attested by Ibn Abī Šaybah⁹⁶⁰ and Abū Dāwūd.⁹⁶¹ To me, it seems rather unlikely (but not impossible) that Yahyā ʿbn Saʿīd al-Qaṭān (as CL or PCL) invented this *isnād*, perhaps to replace the "weak" (because it involves "merely written" transmission) *isnād* ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb *can* *ʿadī-hi* ("on the authority of his father") and so on with a "better" line of transmitters (because it involves purely "heard"/"audited" transmission). A key argument against such a supposition would be the fact that the tradition's content was probably not very much to the liking of Yahyā, a Basrian scholar way of written transmission. It would be highly improbable for him to "improve" the *hadīṭ* by providing it with a "better" *isnād* of his own invention. The following explanation is in my opinion more likely: ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-Aḥnas, the teacher of Yahyā,⁹⁶² who claimed to have received the tradition from al-Walīd ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Muḡīl,⁹⁶³ was himself a student of ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb.⁹⁶⁴ Native *Hadīṭ* criticism already charges him with numerous faults in transmission.⁹⁶⁵ Therefore, it is quite conceivable that for this *hadīṭ*, he either inadvertently or intentionally named Walīd ibn ʿAbd Allāh, another of his teachers, instead of the correct transmitter ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb. [248] If that were the case, we would have almost restored the tree structure. The only remaining task would be to delete the rarely attested transmission line leading through ʿAtāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ to Ibn ʿUrayḡ, which is apparently only known to Ibn ʿUrayḡ. It clearly merits less confidence than the well-attested and indubitably historical line Ibn ʿUrayḡ *can* ("on the authority of") ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb. If we follow this reconstruction and argue that the *hadīṭ* was initially disseminated by ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb (as the CL), another question suggests itself: did ʿAmr project backwards

to the Prophet a tradition which was originally attributed to, and ended with, or was narrated about, his great-grandfather ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr (probably the one in Figure IV.1, which ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb had in his repertoire anyway), by appending the unverifiable *isnād* "from my father, from his grandfather" to it?⁹⁶⁶ In favor of this hypothesis, we could argue that ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb consistently preferred the Prophet as a source for legal knowledge.⁹⁶⁷

In conclusion, it should be stressed that these considerations are purely hypothetical. We are unable on the basis of *isnād* analysis alone to exclude the possibility that the *hadīṭ* was already disseminated in the first/seventh century by ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr.

The case of *hadīṭ* of Figure III.2 is less complicated. Its text is nothing more than a variant, more exactly an updated variant, of the wording of Figure III.1. ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿammal, who received the tradition from ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb, is responsible for this intervention.⁹⁶⁸ He simply substituted the older phrase "Yes, write (it) down!" with the slogan "Shackle the knowledge" (cf. p. 129). It is therefore not an outright forgery, but a special case of *ar-rīwāyah bi-l-maṣnāʿ* (non-literal transmission). The two transmission lines which do *not* pass through ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb to ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr are suspect: compare the discussion of Figure III.1 on the line Ibn ʿUrayḡ *can* ʿAtāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ *can* ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr. Our only witness for the line Ibn Abī Mulaḡkah *can* ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr is Ibn al-Muʿammal, and is most likely spurious. Perhaps Ibn al-Muʿammal wanted to support his "updated" version with the additional *isnāds*. If our considerations so far are correct—which in this case is highly likely—we would have restored the customary tree structure also for this tradition: its CL would be ʿAmr ibn Šuʿayb; ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿammal, its PCL.

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To sum up and conclude our discussion, we can state the following: it is certain that, already at the beginning of the second/eighth century, traditions well disposed

towards writing were traced back to the Companions Abū Hurayrah and 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr (Figures IV.1 and IV.2). Possibly, these traditions indeed originated with those two Companions. In this case, they would have already been spread in the seventh century, the first century *ah*. The *Prophetic hadīṣ* permitting written recording are probably more recent than the corresponding *Companion hadīṣ* (the earliest securely identifiable CL of the former group of traditions, exemplified by Figures III.1 and III.2, is 'Amr ibn Ṣu'ayb, d. 118/736), but they are certainly older than the oldest *Prophetic hadīṣ* prohibiting written recording (in which Zayd ibn Aslam, d. 136/753, is the CL). Still, we cannot rule out the possibility that a *Prophetic hadīṣ* approving of written recording was disseminated as early as the first/seventh century (with 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr as the possible CL of the *hadīṣ* of Figures III.1 and III.2).

Thus, we arrive at the following hypothetical chronological sequence (in what follows, we ignore the first/seventh century, in which there might have been a rudimentary discussion of the subject):

- 1 Successors credit Companions with *hadīṣ* approving of written recording (first quarter of the second/eighth century; particularly in Mecca and Yemen), probably initially in reaction to the predominant (theoretical) consensus *not* to write down traditions (for public use), subsequently also as a reaction to (2).
- 2 In the same period, other Successors credit Companions with *hadīṣ* against writing (in Basrah and Kūfah and also in Mecca), initially as a reaction to the growing practice of writing down traditions as a mnemonic aid and later also to dispute (1) but—most importantly—to combat Umayyad efforts towards a codification of the *hadīṣ*.
- 3 Emergence of *Prophetic hadīṣ* in favor of writing (first and second quarter of the second/eighth century; especially in Mecca) in reaction to (2).
- 4 Appearance of *Prophetic hadīṣ* against writing (second and third quarter of the second/eighth century; Medina and Basrah) in reaction to (3) and especially in reaction to the prevailing public use of written compilations by traditionists in Damascus, Mecca, and Ṣan'ā'.

Addenda

The most important recent work on the subject is M. Cook's booklength article *The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam*.⁹⁷⁰ He agrees with me on most points, but also points out "substantial disagreements."⁹⁷¹ He writes: "Schoeler's adherence to Schacht's 'common link' method constitutes the major methodological difference between his approach and my own."⁹⁷² Cook maintains that we *cannot* make any claims about the controversy surrounding the writing down of traditions in the first/seventh century.⁹⁷³ Interestingly, he has no serious objection to my chronology of that controversy.⁹⁷⁴ Another bone of contention is my account of the efforts of the Umayyads to codify *Hadīṣ* as well as my take on

az-Zuhrī's activities as a collector of traditions.⁹⁷⁵ On the basis of the arguments set out above, I still cannot see any reason to doubt the authenticity of these reports. Cook's "main objection to this view is that, had these initiatives been historical, representing a concerted effort on the part of the authorities in Syria, we would have expected them to leave a strong mark on Syrian Tradition; but this is not in fact the case." However, the author concedes that "these reports . . . are not in themselves implausible."⁹⁷⁶ See also my remarks concerning p. 122 and 123–124.

Another important recent source on the issue is M. J. Kister's article *Lā taqrān 'l-quṣṣana 'ala 'l-mushafayn* . . . *Some Notes on the Transmission of Ḥadīṣ*.⁹⁷⁷ Kister lists and analyzes numerous traditions dealing with writing down *hadīṣ*.

P. 122 and pp. 123–124

In all likelihood, the element of coercion apparent in az-Zuhrī's tradition "We had an aversion to writing . . ." relates to the caliph Hishām and *not* 'Umar II: in traditions referring to 'Umar II which deal with the codification of *Hadīṣ*, this element never occurs.⁹⁷⁸ If there is any mention of a ruler exerting pressure, it is invariably Hishām, never 'Umar II. Apparently Cook believes that the reports concerning the codification of *Hadīṣ* were transferred from Hishām to 'Umar: "in some versions . . . (the bully?) Hishām is replaced by the (saintly?) 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz; the tradition then lacks the character of an excuse."⁹⁷⁹ It seems to me that traditions about the codification efforts of 'Umar II originally mentioned only Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥazm as (designated) collector. Apparently, only late and unreliable reports forge the link between 'Umar II and az-Zuhrī.⁹⁸⁰ Thus, az-Zuhrī's *Hadīṣ* compilation—which I regard as authentic—probably only took place during the caliphate of Hishām. He commissioned it for the use of the princes.

P. 128

There *does* seem to have been some opposition in Yemen in the first half of the second/eighth century against the writing down of traditions after all. Cook⁹⁸¹ points out that in the majority of sources, Tāwūs ibn Kaysān (d. 106/724–725) was portrayed as an opponent of writing. On this issue, I now side with Cook who notes that "both Meccan and Yemeni tradition provide useful evidence of the controversy over writing."⁹⁸²

P. 130

Sezgin's own account of his method can be found translated in chapter 1, p. 178, n. 132.

Pp. 139–140

While Cook rejects the common link method, on which my hypothetical chronology of the controversy is based, he observes: "Though unable to establish such a chronology myself, I have no serious objection to it."⁹⁸³

6

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THE
KITĀB AL-ʿAYN?*ḥizā ʾl-Kitāb ʾawwal al-ḥizāʾilij*

This book is the first composition (Ḥaǧǧī Ḥalīfan)

I

The *Kitāb al-ʿayn* (*The Book of [the Letter] ʿAyn*) is the first and oldest dictionary of the Arabic language written in Arabic.⁹⁸⁴ It consists of two parts: the introduction, that sets out the idea of creating a dictionary, which comprises the entire vocabulary of Arabic, and the dictionary proper. The introduction establishes a highly idiosyncratic system of arranging the Arabic roots that constitute the lemma. This system is based not on alphabetical order, but on phonetic criteria, according to where the root's radical letters are pronounced. From sounds produced at the deepest point of the throat, the laryngeals, it proceeds upwards and ends with the labials. According to this schema, the "deepest" sound is the letter *ʿayn*. In the main part of the work, the dictionary proper, the Arabic roots are listed and explained,⁹⁸⁵ arranged according to the principle discussed in the introduction.⁹⁸⁶ Individual lemmata not only contain lexical material, but often also grammatical, metrical, and musical information.⁹⁸⁷ The first chapter lists all roots beginning with the letter *ʿayn* or containing the consonant in any other position. Accordingly, the whole book is called *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.

The fundamental importance of the work for Arabic lexicography and the immense interest aroused by the so-called phonetical-permutative order need not be discussed here. Rather, in the following study, we will focus on the question of authorship: who was the author of this, the oldest Arabic dictionary, [16] and perhaps the oldest scientific work in the Arabic language?

The discussion of this issue is, in F. Sezgin's words,⁹⁸⁸ "very complicated and goes back to a very early period." One of the frequently mentioned candidates for authorship is the great Basrian grammarian and metrical scholar al-Ḥalī ibn Ahmad (d. probably between 160/777 and 175/791),⁹⁸⁹ the teacher of Sībawayhi and discoverer of the Arabic metrical system. Yet, even a cursory glance at the

work reveals that the situation is more complicated,⁹⁹⁰ for al-Ḥalī is frequently quoted, but only as *one* authority among many others. In addition, we find many quotes from philologists and poets, some of which are substantially later than al-Ḥalī and which he could not therefore have quoted. Furthermore, we can read in the introduction about the substantial contributions to the work by another scholar, a certain al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaḥḥar (d. 100/815–816).⁹⁹¹ Apart from the fact that he was apparently a companion or friend of al-Ḥalī, not much is known about this not very important philologist.

Numerous studies have already been devoted to the question of the authorship of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.⁹⁹² Three scholars in particular left their mark on the discussion: Erich Bräunlich, Stefan Wild, and Rafael Talmon.

In his study entitled *Al-Ḥalī und das Kitāb al-ʿAin*,⁹⁹³ Bräunlich was the first to distinguish theoretically and practically between the two approaches open to us in answering the question of the authorship of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*:

- 1 an analysis of the text of the work itself;
- 2 a collection and critical examination of the positions medieval Muslim scholars took on this matter.

In sum, Bräunlich established that the majority of Muslim scholars, while denying al-Ḥalī's authorship, took the view that other scholars, al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaḥḥar in particular, contributed to the work. This is a fundamental observation. Bräunlich's own opinion, based mainly on his analysis of the text of the work itself (which, however, was only partially available to him), is as follows: while al-Ḥalī deserves to be called the book's "intellectual creator" and the originator of "the plan" or "idea of such a comprehensive Arabic dictionary and its astute arrangement . . . on the lines of formal criteria," al-Layṭ has to be credited with continuing and [17] finishing it.⁹⁹⁴ Bräunlich observes: "We have to do with one of those frequent cases in which the intellectual creator is not identical with its redactor."⁹⁹⁵

Unsurprisingly, the question of authorship had to be revisited once more in Wild's monograph on the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*—if only because now the complete text of the work was available in a Berlin manuscript. His findings confirm and specify those of Bräunlich. They can be summed up as follows.⁹⁹⁶ In its transmitted form, the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* must have been compiled on the basis of different sources and cannot have originated from al-Ḥalī as a whole. Rather, for the most part, it originated from al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaḥḥar. Later redactors also contributed a part of the material.⁹⁹⁷ But the actual author or at least the most important compiler or redactor is al-Layṭ. Only those passages and ideas with which the redactor expressly credited him can be confidently attributed to al-Ḥalī. These are as follows:

- 1 Most of the ever so important introduction, including the idea of the creation of a comprehensive dictionary of the Arabic language and the justification of its peculiar arrangement. Moreover, this introduction is extant not in the form edited by al-Ḥalī, but in the redaction of al-Layṭ.

- 2 Those sections of the dictionary explicitly ascribed to al-Haṭṭī. Wild observes: "This, however, means that, for the largest part of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, we cannot prove, and therefore should not posit, its direct or indirect provenance from al-Haṭṭī."⁹⁹⁸

Even though Bräunlich's and Wild's findings are largely consonant and rest on a firm methodical and textual basis, they have not won unanimous recognition and have occasionally been disputed.

In the introduction to his edition of the first part of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* (published 1967), A. Darwīš claimed that al-Haṭṭī wrote the entire book; he relegated al-Layṭī to the simple role of transmitter.⁹⁹⁹ According to Darwīš, the numerous quotations from later philologists and poets are additions supplied by later redactors such as we frequently find in old Arabic scientific works.¹⁰⁰⁰

[18] The text of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* is now completely available in an eight-volume edition prepared by M. al-Maḥzūmī and I. as-Samarāʾī. The editors concur with the position taken by Darwīš and conclude: "The *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, its theoretical foundation and execution, its explanation, interpretation and citation of evidence, is the work of al-Haṭṭī, because it fully matches his (scientific) procedure and his mindset."¹⁰⁰¹

They maintain that the different view taken by the indigenous tradition arose because the work was created in a time in which scholars were mentally not yet capable of grasping and accepting such a marvellous achievement.¹⁰⁰²

While these Arab scholars ascribe the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* more or less completely to al-Haṭṭī, the Polish Arabist Janusz Danecki takes a diametrically opposed position. In his article entitled "Early Arabic Phonetical Theory. Phonetics of al-Haṭṭī Ibn Ahmad and Sībawayhi" (1986), he seeks to prove that al-Haṭṭī cannot have been the intellectual father of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, let alone its actual author. He arrives at this conclusion on the basis of a comparison between the phonetic teachings al-Haṭṭī is credited with in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* and those put forward by his most eminent student Sībawayhi in his grammatical work, the *Kiṭāb*. Danecki is able to demonstrate that the texts ascribed to al-Haṭṭī cannot have been known to Sībawayhi: while the latter, as W. Reuschel showed, quotes al-Haṭṭī hundreds of times in his *Kiṭāb*,¹⁰⁰³ there is not even one single reference to him in the part of his book dealing with phonetics.¹⁰⁰⁴ Since al-Haṭṭī's purported phonetic system is obviously more elaborate and superior when compared with Sībawayhi's, Danecki assumes that it must have emerged later than Sībawayhi's system and consequently could not have originated with al-Haṭṭī.¹⁰⁰⁵ Danecki's assumption leads to the conclusion that al-Layṭī's ascriptions of material to al-Haṭṭī are false, that is, deliberately forged. As evidence for his hypothesis, he also quotes the views of ancient Arab philologists, the majority of whom doubted or rejected outright al-Haṭṭī's authorship.¹⁰⁰⁶

Most recently, R. Talmon published his views on the issue of authorship. In his book *Arabic Grammar in its Formative Age. Kitāb al-ʿayn and its Attribution to Ḥaṭṭī ibn Ahmad* (1997), he probed the problem again from all angles.

One approach he took was to compile all instances in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* in which al-Haṭṭī is named and quoted and to analyze both the respective terms (*ʿaḥḥāz*) used to introduce the quotations and the contents of the quotations in question.¹⁰⁰⁷ Further, he checked the entire range of grammatical (but not lexical) discussions and teachings found in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* [19] against the teachings usually ascribed to al-Haṭṭī in other works (particularly in Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb*).¹⁰⁰⁸

Talmon's position on the issue of authorship largely tallies with the views taken by Bräunlich and Wild. On the basis of his textual evidence, he establishes that al-Haṭṭī's main contribution consisted of the "formation of *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*'s outlines," its plan or schema¹⁰⁰⁹; though he did not work out the individual lemmata in detail. This was left for al-Layṭī to elaborate. But as phrases such as *qāla ʿl-Layṭī: qulu li-ʿl-Haṭṭī... fa-qāla* ("al-Layṭī said: I said to al-Haṭṭī... and he said") demonstrate, "Haṭṭī collaborated with Layṭī in the composition of entries in this dictionary and was his authority in the systematic and detailed organization of its general scheme."¹⁰¹⁰

In addition, the following results of Talmon's work are relevant for this study:

- 1 All information given in the biographical literature about the relation between al-Haṭṭī and al-Layṭī and their respective roles in creating the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* was taken from the book itself.¹⁰¹¹ Thus, we cannot treat it as evidence independent of the statements provided by the book itself. This is an important supplement to Bräunlich's analysis of the opinions of indigenous Muslim scholars.
- 2 Numerous grammatical teachings explicitly ascribed to al-Haṭṭī in Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb* and other early sources can also be found in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*. Here, some of them are expressly attributed to al-Haṭṭī, some are quoted without naming the source.¹⁰¹² This means that—an important addition to Wild's findings—large parts of the dictionary proper, including passages not explicitly ascribed to him, must have been based on teachings of al-Haṭṭī.

However, Talmon does not explain why, according to the tradition, the older linguistic scholars, particularly the companions and important students of al-Haṭṭī as well as the following generation of scholars, absolutely refused to acknowledge the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* as the work of their master. In this context, Talmon's realization that the information contained in the biographical literature largely depends on the text of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* cannot satisfactorily explain the situation: a close reading of the text would have revealed to these scholars not only al-Layṭī's contribution, but also that of al-Haṭṭī. Further, Talmon does not comment on an argument advanced by Bräunlich¹⁰¹³: early Muslim scholars did not refer to al-Haṭṭī as a lexicographer (*luḡawī*); in addition, there are almost no instances of lexical teachings by him quoted in the oldest relevant texts.¹⁰¹⁴ [20] Instead, Talmon advocated studying the lexical material in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* and comparing it with corresponding material in other early sources (he himself did not undertake such a study). This material was then to be checked against a claim ascribed to Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī, who is

said to have stated that none of al-Haḥlī's important students quoted from the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* in their own lexical works.¹⁰¹⁵ Finally, there seems to me to be no adequate explanation for the fact (pointed out by Bräunlich and Danecki) that Sībawayhi quoted al-Haḥlī hundreds of times in his grammatical book, but not a single time in the part dealing with phonetics.¹⁰¹⁶

The main reason why we will take up the issue again at this point is our conviction that we are now in a position to come to a definitive conclusion, mostly on account of the progress made in the last two decades by intensive research on the system and methods of early Islamic transmission. These results have clarified our views of "the written and the oral" and "writing and books in early Islam."

An analysis of the al-Haḥlī quotes, including their introductory terminology (*ʿalāqā*), in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* will be both the starting point and central element of our study. At a later stage, we will discuss and try to understand the views of the ancient Arabic philologists on the authorship of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*. In conclusion, we will critically assess those points of view which differ from the—in our opinion definitive—ideas proposed in this study.

II

After the *basmalah* and the *ḥamdalāh*, the work begins with the following sentence:

This is what the Basrian al-Haḥlī ibn Ahmad (God have mercy on him)¹⁰¹⁷ compiled on the letters [21] *ʿalif, bā, tā, ḥā* (*ḥādā mā yallaḡa-hu ʾl-Haḥlī ibn ʿAhmad al-Basī rahmat Allāh ʿalay-hi min ḥurūf ʿalif, bā, tā, ḥā...*).¹⁰¹⁸

This sentence introduces a short preface by the redactor, who explains why al-Haḥlī did not start his dictionary with the first letter of the alphabet, *ʿalif*, and how he came to arrange sounds according to their points of pronunciation.¹⁰¹⁹ There is no doubt that these statements are made by a redactor and not by al-Haḥlī.¹⁰²⁰ The manuscripts on which the edition is based, however, do not give us any hints as to the identity of the redactor of this preface. The most likely candidate would be al-Layṭ. This is also what al-Azharī says, who quotes most of the preface and the introduction of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* in the introduction to his *Tahḏīb (The Refinement of Language)*.¹⁰²¹ However, we cannot exclude the possibility that al-Layṭ's transmitter or an even later scholar was the redactor in question, because the introductory or opening *ʿisnād (riwāyah)*¹⁰²² which lists the two transmitters or redactors of the work following al-Haḥlī, is placed (at least in the manuscripts on which the edition is based) only *after* the preface and may only apply to what follows without necessarily applying to the contents of the preceding text.

The introductory *ʿisnād* is as follows: "Abū Muʾaḏ ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀʾid says: al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaḥḥar... has transmitted to me (*ḥaddata-nī*) everything in this book on the authority of al-Haḥlī."

The most recent transmitter named in the *ʿisnād*, Abū Muʾaḏ ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀʾid¹⁰²³ is obscure; apart from the fact that he was a student and transmitter of al-Layṭ, we do not have any substantial information about him.¹⁰²⁴ The terminology of his introductory *ʿisnād* suggests that he had already received the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* as a whole from al-Layṭ.¹⁰²⁵ As a matter of fact, we find not a single contribution from him in the entire book. He claims to have received the book in "heard"/"audited" transmission (*ar-riwāyah al-musmūʿah*) from al-Layṭ (*ḥaddata-nī*).

[22] It should be pointed out that the expression used in the *ʿisnād* ("[he] transmitted... everything") is very much open to misconstruction. It suggests to the reader that the entire text of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* originated with al-Haḥlī or is at least based on his teachings.¹⁰²⁶ This cannot be the case, as can be seen from the source information provided shortly afterwards (e.g. on p. 50: *qāla ʾl-Layṭ, qulu li-ʾAbī ʾd-Duḡayš... fa-qāla*, "al-Layṭ said: I asked Abū ʾd-Duḡayš... he then answered"; and on p. 51: *qāla... Ḥamzah ibn Zurʾah*, "Ḥamzah ibn Zurʾah said..." etc.). The claim behind the expression could have originated with either al-Layṭ or Abū Muʾaḏ, but al-Layṭ would be more likely to have been its source than his transmitter. It is possible—as one medieval scholar, al-Azharī, already suspected¹⁰²⁷—that al-Layṭ consciously chose this formulation to create the impression that the whole *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* was the work of al-Haḥlī.

Immediately after the introductory *ʿisnād*, we read¹⁰²⁸: "Al-Layṭ said: al-Haḥlī said (*qāla ʾl-Layṭ, qāla ʾl-Haḥlī*): the words of the Arabs are constructed in four ways: with two, three, four or five radicals."¹⁰²⁹

This begins the text of the actual introduction of the book in al-Haḥlī's own words.¹⁰³⁰ The subsequent text, however, is not uniform in the sense that al-Layṭ, from that point on, continuously quoted a conclusively edited text by al-Haḥlī. On p. 49, we find two instances of "al-Haḥlī said" in close proximity, indicating that the redactor apparently put together two of the master's fragments. In this case, we at least have to do with two thematically related al-Haḥlī quotations. But on p. 50, we find: "al-Layṭ said: I asked Abū ʾd-Duḡayš... he then answered..." Another short quote from al-Haḥlī follows on the same page. Subsequently (on top of p. 51), we find a quote from another scholar ("Abū Ahmad Ḥamzah ibn Zurʾah said..."). It is followed by the first of al-Haḥlī's three famous phonetic treatises,¹⁰³¹ introduced by "al-Haḥlī said." However, attached to it is not the second phonetic treatise (which starts on p. 57), but another quote (the first, mentioned above, occurred on p. 48) from al-Haḥlī on specific problems of the Arabic radical consonants (p. 52). Al-Layṭ poses a question on that subject, introduced by *qāla ʾl-Layṭ: qulu [li-ʾl-Haḥlī] fa-qāla* ("al-Layṭ said: I said [to al-Haḥlī]... and he said," p. 52) and so on.

Other important introductory formulations are "he [sc. al-Haḥlī] sometimes said" (pp. 57 and 58, inserted into the second phonetic treatise) and "al-Haḥlī was wont to call..." (p. 58).

Obviously, the introduction is not a uniform text conclusively redacted by al-Haḥlī (and "merely" quoted by al-Layṭ).¹⁰³² [23] Rather, it is (at least from

the introductory *ʿisnād* onwards) a compilation put together by al-Layṭ. Still, it consists for the most part of pieces derived from al-Ḥaṭīl, which themselves are far from being uniform. Naturally, al-Ḥaṭīl's answers to al-Layṭ's questions are "oral" or were only recorded in writing by al-Layṭ. However, both the text of the introduction (cf. above, on p. 146) and the three phonetical treatises probably go back to drafts written by al-Ḥaṭīl. The use of the phrase *ʿilām ʿanna* ("know that," obviously an address to the *reader*), gives us a clue—but no certain proof—as to the written character of these sections: we find the expression twice in al-Ḥaṭīl's introduction (p. 49) and at the beginning of two (nos I and III) out of the three phonetic treatises (pp. 51 and 59). The use of *ʿilām ʿanna* conforms fully to the style of later Arabic syntagmatic works—Sībawayhi also uses it frequently in his *Kiṭāb* (vol. 1, pp. 17, 19, 20, 21, three times on p. 22, etc.) It would be wrong to assume that we are dealing here with "mere" records or memories of lecture courses; the material is worked out with too much care and precision. Since the three treatises originated in different phases of al-Ḥaṭīl's career,¹⁰³³ we have to assume that he preserved all of his written drafts. The inserted expression *wa-qā-la marratan* ("he said once," in combination with a variant of a previously used phrase), which we find twice in the second treatise (p. 57), indicates that the master often discussed this text with al-Layṭ or talked about the subject with him on more than one occasion.¹⁰³⁴

Another fragment of an unquestionably written character can be found at the end of the introduction, marking the transition to the dictionary proper (p. 60): "Al-Ḥaṭīl said: in this work, we have begun with the letter *ʿayn*... (*badana fī meallaf-nā hādā bi-l-ʿayn*...)." ¹⁰³⁵

For our purpose, al-Ḥaṭīl's¹⁰³⁵ use of the root *ʿallafa*, "to compose" in the form of the word *meallaf*, "(composed) work" is of the utmost significance¹⁰³⁶; it indicates that al-Ḥaṭīl had begun to write a proper book. He then made the resultant fragment(s) available to his friend al-Layṭ. With al-Layṭ, and al-Layṭ alone, did [24] he discuss the book and its contents. This can be seen from the questions al-Layṭ time and again asked al-Ḥaṭīl. Together with Talmon, we can thus far talk about a "cooperation" between the two scholars. Al-Layṭ must for a long time have been the only person aware of the fragment(s) of the book and its contents. He assembled the fragments and supplemented them with information he gathered from asking the master and, less frequently, other scholars (such as Abū ʿa-Duḡayš, p. 50). He added further material and provided the whole work with redactional notes and remarks. The result is the introduction to the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* known to us today.

Quotations from al-Ḥaṭīl can also be found in the dictionary proper. They are, however, much less frequent than in the introduction. According to Talmon's data, al-Ḥaṭīl's name occurs 67 times in the entire work. Of these 67 occurrences, 21 appear in the introduction.¹⁰³⁷ The quotations occur throughout the whole work; in addition to the introduction his name occurs relatively frequently in the chapter on *al-ʿayn*, which fills two volumes of the eight-volume printed edition of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* (20 instances). Another high count of incidences occurs at the end of the

work (vol. 8, pp. 421, 437, 441, 443, 444, 445). Relatively often, we find al-Ḥaṭīl quotations at the beginning of individual lemmata, where al-Ḥaṭīl explains words (vol. 1, pp. 62, 235; vol. 4, p. 131) or, more often, comments on the construction of possible permutations and combinations of radical consonants (vol. 1, pp. 60, 96; vol. 2, p. 274; vol. 3, p. 5; vol. 5, pp. 6, 32; vol. 7, p. 5; vol. 8, pp. 375, 405, 411, 421, 437). In the latter case, Talmon uses the term "technical frame".¹⁰³⁸ These passages definitely belong to the original contents of the dictionary, already put into writing by al-Ḥaṭīl: they also contain the expression *fa-ʿilām-hū* ("so know it"; vol. 1, p. 96)¹⁰³⁹ and, especially significant in that it indicates incontrovertibly the written character of the two passages, a cross reference. In vol. 5, p. 32, we read:

Bāb at-tulūṭ: as-sahīḥ min al-qāf qāla ʿil-Haṭīl: al-qāf wa-l-kāf lā yataḥḥabbi, wa-l-ḡīm lā tatarīfu ʾillā fī ʾahruf mʿarrabah qad bayyantu-hā fī ʾawwal al-bāb at-tām min al-qāf

Chapter on the Trilateral [Word]: Proper Use of [the Letter] *Qāf*. Al-Ḥaṭīl said: the [letters] *qāf*, *kāf* and *ḡīm* only go together in words which have been arabicized as I have made clear in the first part of the second chapter of the [lemma] on the [letter] *qāf*

Al-Ḥaṭīl refers to vol. 5, p. 6, where he had indeed already explained:

Harf al-qāf: qāla ʿil-Haṭīl: al-qāf wa-l-kāf lā yaḡamīʿāni fī kalimah wāḥidah ʾillā ʾan takūna ʿil-kalimah mʿarrabah min kalām al-ʿaḡam, wa-ka-ḡālika ʿl-ḡīm mʿa ʿl-qāf...

The [Letter] *Qāf*: al-Ḥaṭīl said: the [letters] *qāf* and *kāf* are only joined in the same word when that word has been arabicized from a foreign word. The same holds for the [letter] *ḡīm* with the [letter] *qāf*...

We observe that al-Ḥaṭīl quotations are much more frequent at the beginning and at the end of the work than in the middle, where they are quite sparse (vol. 1, pp. 60, 96, 129; vol. 2, pp. 274, 345; vol. 3, p. 5; vol. 5, pp. 5, 6, 32; vol. 7, p. 5; vol. 8, pp. 375, 405, 411, 421, 437). Even if we have constantly to keep in mind [25] that not all material deriving from al-Ḥaṭīl is always systematically quoted in his name (cf. immediately below), this distribution suggests that the master worked out (or only sketched) paradigmatic lemmata mainly for the beginning and end of the work and that he left their elaboration, especially in the middle part, to someone else, namely, al-Layṭ. He seems to have discussed these passages with al-Layṭ up to the chapter entitled *harf al-hāʾ* ("the letter *hāʾ*"), for the latter asked al-Ḥaṭīl a question about the "technical frame" of *al-hāʾ* (vol. 3, p. 5).

Most of the remaining al-Ḥaṭīl quotations in the core of the lemmata, however, can scarcely belong to the original contents of the dictionary. According to Talmon,

they more often contain grammatical (as well as metrical and musical) rather than lexical teachings of the master.¹⁰⁴⁰ Mostly, they are simply introduced with *qāla ʿĪḥālī* ("al-Ḥālī said"). Therefore, we often cannot distinguish whether the redactor quotes material addressed to him personally by al-Ḥālī or includes recollections or records of his lecture courses (*mağālis*). Not infrequently, however, such a lecture of al-Ḥālī must have been the source, for example, in vol. 3, p. 215 and vol. 5, p. 166, where we find: "al-Layṭ said: al-Ḥālī was asked and said." The quotation in vol. 6, pp. 64 ff. is certainly based on a lecture on metrics: the redactor quotes a substantial discussion by al-Ḥālī arguing that the *rağaz* meter (*mašīr* and *manhūk*, i.e. dimeter or trimeter) is not poetry. On several occasions, the lecturer (al-Ḥālī) is interrupted by members of the audience, once with a critical remark. At the end, we read: "we were amazed by his speech once we had heard his proof."

It is equally certain that much of the material in the dictionary proper which the redactor does not explicitly ascribe to al-Ḥālī must be his intellectual property. This has been shown by Talmon.¹⁰⁴¹ For numerous grammatical teachings in the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* with which al-Ḥālī is explicitly credited in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* and other works. Since al-Ḥālī did not write a book on grammar¹⁰⁴² and since Sībawayhi could therefore only have made use of the so-called oral material of his teacher (answers and lectures), al-Ḥālī must have disseminated the relevant grammatical material (also) in scholarly circles. In many cases we have to ask ourselves whether al-Ḥālī would have included this non-lexical material at all if he himself had edited the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.

The distribution of al-Layṭ's name (in the form of *qāla ʿī-Layṭ*, "al-Layṭ said," mostly accompanied by *qāla ʿĪḥālī*, "al-Ḥālī said") is much more infrequent in the lexical section of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* than in the introduction. After volume 4, it apparently does not occur any more.¹⁰⁴³ Still, there can be no doubt that al-Layṭ also compiled and redacted most of the dictionary proper. [26] It is certain that the numerous occurrences of the first person singular, for example, *lam ʿasmanʿ* ("I did not hear", 33 times according to Talmon), or plural, e.g. *balaga-nā* ("it reached us", Talmon counts 10 incidences), refer to al-Layṭ.¹⁰⁴⁴

So too for the dictionary proper, al-Layṭ's compilatory and redactional work consisted of the following tasks: he compiled the extant written fragments of al-Ḥālī; he completed them (e.g. by filling in the gaps in al-Ḥālī's "technical frame," which had probably not been completed, on the basis of model entries provided by the latter); he added personal communications he received from the master (often in the form of answers to questions); and, finally, he supplemented the al-Ḥālī material with additions drawn from other scholars and (infrequently) his own observations (vol. 1, p. 192; vol. 3, p. 32). In addition, he introduced into the lexical section recollections (or records) of al-Ḥālī's lecture courses or debating circles, which dealt with grammatical and metrical, rarely musical, issues, but never lexical problems. Unfortunately, in the case of many passages, especially the "technical frame," the dictionary's actual core, we are all too often unable to distinguish between the contributions of al-Ḥālī and al-Layṭ.

In sum, one particularly important result of our study is the following: in the core part of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, which undoubtedly originated from al-Ḥālī himself, al-Ḥālī uses the term *muallaḥf-nā*, "our (composed) work"; second, aspects of his terminology suggest a written style (e.g. *ʿīlam ʿanna*, "know that"); and, most importantly, he includes a cross-reference in the lexical section. These points clearly demonstrate that al-Ḥālī had begun to write a proper book for readers, more particularly for dictionary users. This was unheard of for his time!¹⁰⁴⁵

[27] According to the results of research published in the last two decades, Arab scholars before al-Ḥālī's time used as a rule¹⁰⁴⁶ to transmit their knowledge in the form of lectures or discussions with their students in *mağālis* ("sessions") and *ḥalaqāt* (scholarly circles). In most cases, they used written records as mnemonic aids; their students in turn made written notes. During al-Ḥālī's time, writings belonging to the genre which the Arabs called *muṣannaḡāt* emerged in numerous disciplines. These were systematically ordered works, arranged into chapters according to subject matter, which, however, were not intended at this early stage for a reading public but only for oral presentation. This type of work, straddling the borders of *synggramma* and *hypomnēma*, was already known in antiquity: W. W. Jaeger observes that these writings were "neither lecture notes nor literature" and calls them "scientific writings of the school . . . published . . . by way of lectures."¹⁰⁴⁷ According to H. S. Nyberg, Ibn al-Kalbi's (d. 204/819)¹⁰⁴⁸ *Book of Idols* (*Kitāb al-aṣṇām*) belongs to this category of works "which, as it were, lacked an independent literary life." There are other examples in different fields: in *Ḥadīṭ*, the *Muṣannaḡāt* of Ibn Qurayṣ, Ma'mar ibn Rāṣid, and 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak¹⁰⁴⁹, in historiography, the works of Abū Miḡnaf and Sayf ibn 'Umar; in *fiqh*, the *Kitāb al-muwāṭṭaʿ* (The Book of the Well-Trodden [Path]) by Mālik ibn Anas; in exegesis, the *Tafsīr* (Qur'ān Commentary) of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān; in theology, the works of Dirār ibn 'Amr, and so on. Of al-Ḥālī's own writings, we probably have to put the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* (The Book of Prosody) into this category and possibly also the *Kitāb al-ʿiqāʿ* (The Book of Musical Metrics).¹⁰⁵⁰ [28] But since these works were linked to the lecture system and lacked an independent literary life, all of them were lost in their original form. Often, however, the materials they contain were amply used and quoted.¹⁰⁵¹ A considerable number of them are extant in further transmission and later revisions, for example, Ma'mar's *Kitāb al-ḡāmṭ* (The Collection), which was incorporated in 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaḡ* (The Systematically Arranged [Compilation]); Mālik ibn Anas's *Kitāb al-muwāṭṭaʿ*, extant in several transmissions (recensions); the *Tafsīr* of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān; parts of the *Muṣannaḡ* of 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak; and, last but not least, al-Ḥālī's own *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, known to us in a rearranged version transmitted in Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's *Kitāb al-ʿiqāʿ al-farīd* (The Book of the Unique Necklaces).¹⁰⁵²

A comparison between one of the writings preserved only in later transmission mentioned above and Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, an actual *synggramma* bearing all the hallmarks of a proper book addressed to a reading public,¹⁰⁵³ would show how

substantial the difference is between this category of writings and *syngammata*, books produced in accordance with all of the dictates of the art.

Al-Haḥlī did not hold any lectures on the material of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.¹⁰⁵⁴ Medieval scholars of linguistics had already established this. [29] In the *Fihrist* (*The Index or Catalogue*), we find the following remark about the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, which probably originated with Ibn Durayd: "nobody transmitted this book from al-Haḥlī."¹⁰⁵⁵ Al-Haḥlī did not *systematically* discuss his lexicographical findings and phonetical doctrines in debating circles or communicate them in lectures, the accepted contemporary methods of disseminating knowledge which he himself used to spread his grammatical, metrical, and musical teachings. Evidence for this assumption is provided by two facts collected by Brānlich, who showed that

- 1 the older Muslim scholars never call al-Haḥlī *al-luḡawī*, "the lexicographer," but consistently address him as *an-naḥwī*, "the grammarian"; and that
- 2 the earliest philological texts only quote grammatical, but almost never lexical (and phonetical) teachings of al-Haḥlī.¹⁰⁵⁶

To the numerous works by al-Asmaʿī, Abū Zayd, Ibn Qutaybah, and others which Brānlich scoured, we can now add Abū ʿUbaydah's *Kitāb maǧāz al-Qurʾān* (*The Book of Figurative Language in the Qurʾān*),¹⁰⁵⁷ Abū ʿAmmār as-Saybānī's *Kitāb al-ǧīm*,¹⁰⁵⁸ and Abū ʿUbayd's *al-ǧarīb al-muṣannaf* (*The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary], Arranged Systematically*).¹⁰⁵⁹ Talmon's renewed analysis of the relevant literature has not cast any doubt on these findings. He found two examples of *al-luḡawī* being applied to al-Haḥlī which are older than those known to Brānlich: however, the earliest is no older than Ibn al-ǧawzī (d. 597/1201)! Even though Talmon called for a fresh effort to find quotations and ideas by al-Haḥlī in the lexicographical literature, it is already obvious that, even if a couple of such quotations could be found, they would not change the overall picture: al-Haḥlī cannot have held lecture courses on phonetics and lexicography. This conclusion does not preclude any remark about lexicographical or phonetical questions he might have occasionally dropped in his circles (on grammar, metrics, or music) or in private discussions, which was subsequently passed on and is thus preserved for us. In the substantial amount of material he studied, Brānlich found a single instance of a "lexico-etymological doctrine of al-Haḥlī"¹⁰⁶⁰; Wild was able to add one or two such lexicographical quotations.¹⁰⁶¹ The first scholar to have demonstrably used the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* is Ibn Durayd (d. 321/993; cf. below on p. 220, n. 1119). Thus, it is certain that for a long time al-Haḥlī the *lexicographer* was unknown to Muslim scholars of linguistics.

[30] Like his master, al-Layṭ did not transmit the work through the usual channels, that is, in lecture courses. To judge from the (at least) four *ʿisnāds*¹⁰⁶² under which, according to Arab scholars of linguistics, the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* was passed on, al-Layṭ taught the book only to a single student in direct ("heard"/"audited") transmission: Abū Muʿāḍ (see above p. 146). It is certain that the work was mainly transmitted in writing (by way of copying manuscripts).

The *ʿisnāds* which do not lead back to Abū Muʿāḍ (nos 1 and 2 in the following list) show a gap between al-Layṭ and his transmitters. They are as follows:

- 1 The chain of transmitters through which Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1005)¹⁰⁶³ received the book.¹⁰⁶⁴ The section relevant for our purpose reads as follows: *Bundār ibn Lizzah wa-Muṭrif ibn Ḥasan ʿan al-Layṭ ʿan al-Haḥlī*. Bundār ibn Lazzah/Lizzah died around 280/893,¹⁰⁶⁵ al-Layṭ probably before 200/815–816. The *ʿisnād* through which Ibn Durustawayhi (d. 347/958)¹⁰⁶⁶ is said to have received the work.¹⁰⁶⁷ This *ʿisnād* runs: ʿAlī bn Mahdī ʿI-Kisrawī: *ḥaddaṭa-ni* Muḥammad ibn Mansūr (ibn al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaʿfar az-Zāǧ), ("ʿAlī bn al-Mahdī ʿI-Kisrawī: Muḥammad ibn Mansūr [ibn al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaʿfar az-Zāǧ] informed me.") The *ʿisnād* stops with the latter, who is a grandson of al-Layṭ. Further, we learn that Muḥammad ibn Mansūr possessed a manuscript which he had "copied" (*intasaha-hā*). This might be a copy which this grandson of al-Layṭ produced for his own use from the autograph of his grandfather, which was still in family hands. Whatever the case, we do not have a direct transmission from al-Layṭ here, either.
- 3 As-Suyūnī quotes another *ʿisnād* in his *Muḥir* (*The Florescent Book [on the Linguistic Sciences]*)¹⁰⁶⁸ which includes a number of famous scholars such as Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) and Ibn Wāḥid (d. 332/943).¹⁰⁶⁹ The section relevant for our purpose runs as follows: ʿan ʿAbī ʿI-Ḥasan ʿAlī bn al-Mahdī ʿan ʿAbī Muʿāḍ ʿAbd al-ǧabbār ibn Yazīd ʿan al-Layṭ ("on the authority of Abū ʿI-Ḥasan ʿAlī bn al-Mahdī on the authority of Abū Muʿāḍ ʿAbd al-ǧabbār ibn Yazīd on the authority of al-Layṭ"). This suggests that the Abū Muʿāḍ listed in this *ʿisnād* is identical with the Abū Muʿāḍ ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀḍid the introduction of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* mentions as a transmitter of al-Layṭ. The unspecific term ʿan ("on the authority of") does not give us any clues about the mode of transmission between ʿAlī bn al-Mahdī and Abū Muʿāḍ on the one hand and Abū Muʿāḍ and al-Layṭ on the other.

Later transmitters made their own additions to al-Layṭ's redacted text—a customary practice in the Islamic transmission system. From the names and dates of the authorities quoted, Wild concluded that the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* must have undergone at least one revision after al-Layṭ.¹⁰⁷⁰

III

[31] Our analysis thus far both confirms and adds precision to the findings of Brānlich, Wild, and Talmon. But this is not the only result we can draw from our new assessment of the question: for we are now in a position to explain plausibly and precisely how the different medieval and modern views on al-Haḥlī's authorship came about, especially its rejection by several medieval and modern scholars.

Let us first turn to the positions of medieval philologists and biographers. Talmon has recognized that testimonies about the relation between al-Ḥallī and al-Layṭ and their respective roles in the composition of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* can be fully explained on the basis of the text of the work alone.¹⁰⁷¹

In the following discussion, we will distinguish between *direct reports* of the biographers and philologists on the one hand and *traditions* quoted by them on the other. These two categories of statements must be treated differently.

Medieval philologists dealt with the following issues in particular or sought to answer the following questions:

- 1 features of the text which implied that al-Ḥallī did not finish the dictionary or that somebody else redacted it;
- 2 possible reasons for this;
- 3 the respective share al-Ḥallī and his co-worker(s) had in the composition of the book.

We will take on each of these points in turn.

Concerning point 1, the feature most frequently adduced in this context is the (alleged or true) *defectiveness* of the work (or at least of a large part of it). This deficiency (especially the large number of flaws), as scholars implied or explicitly declared, would have been unthinkable in a book authored or edited by al-Ḥallī. According to this point of view, these flaws must have been introduced by someone other than the master; most authorities charge al-Layṭ with them.

Taʿlab (d. 291/904) seems to have been the first to notice these flaws; however, we only have two traditions regarding his claims. One of them is reported on the authority of Abū ʿI-Faḍl al-Muḍḍī (d. 329/941),¹⁰⁷² the other on the authority of Abū Bakr as-Ṣūfī (d. 335/946).¹⁰⁷³ According to the latter tradition, there were two main reasons for the book's flaws: [32] first, scholars other than al-Ḥallī filled out the rubrics (al-Layṭ is not mentioned!); second, the book was not transmitted by "heard"/"audited" transmission, but through copying by scribes (*lam yuḥadḥ ʿan-hum riwayatan, ʿinna-mā wuġida bi-naql al-warrāqin, fa-li-dālika ʾiḥalla ʿI-Kiṭāb*, "it was not received from them through [heard] transmission, but only came to exist through the work of the copyists. It is for that reason that the book is defective").

Az-Zubayḍī (d. 379/989) also talks about "contradictions in its manuscripts and confusion in its transmission."¹⁰⁷⁴ Other scholars who point to the defectiveness of the text are: Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933)¹⁰⁷⁵, al-Azharī (d. 370/980)¹⁰⁷⁶, Taʿlab¹⁰⁷⁷, Abū ʿI-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (d. 382/993)¹⁰⁷⁸, Ibn Ġinnī (d. 392/1002)¹⁰⁷⁹, al-Qifī (d. 646/1248)¹⁰⁸⁰, an-Nawawī (d. 676/1278)¹⁰⁸¹, Ibn Ḥallikān (d. 681/1282)¹⁰⁸², and al-Yamānī.¹⁰⁸³

Other features cited are as follows:

- the phonetical teachings of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* are thoroughly Kūfian in character, whereas al-Ḥallī's student Sibawayhi follows the Basrian line in his *Kiṭāb*¹⁰⁸⁴,

- The text quotes scholars who lived after al-Ḥallī¹⁰⁸⁵;
- only one—unknown—person (al-Layṭ) transmitted the book¹⁰⁸⁶;
- finally, scholars were scandalized by this presumptuous statement at the end of the work: *ḥāḏa ʿahīr kalām al-ʿarab*, "this is the end of the (entire) vocabulary of the Arabs." A modest and pious scholar such as al-Ḥallī would never have made such a claim.¹⁰⁸⁷

[33] All of these arguments are, as Bräunlich has already shown, inconclusive. For obvious reasons, the last two can be dismissed out of hand. The rest are not persuasive either: to our modern minds, even the great al-Ḥallī was capable of committing errors; even he could, very much like Sibawayhi, have quoted evidence from modern poets¹⁰⁸⁸; finally, material taken from poets and philologists living *after* the time of al-Ḥallī must have been added by later redactors. Still, there is a grain of truth in the arguments of these Muslim scholars, particularly in the first (the defectiveness of the text), since for a large part, the passages which they criticized in fact probably do not belong to the core of the work going back to al-Ḥallī.

Concerning point 2, the reason most frequently put forward for the hypothesis that al-Ḥallī did not finish the book or that others completed it is his *death*. This explanation is used in the following sources: an anonymous tradition (introduced with *qīla*, "it was said"), possibly on the authority of Ibn Durayd¹⁰⁸⁹, Abū ʿI-Tayyib¹⁰⁹⁰, a tradition traced back to Ishāq ibn Rāhawayhi (or Ishāq al-Ḥanzālī)¹⁰⁹¹, az-Zubayḍī¹⁰⁹², and Ibn Ḥallikān.¹⁰⁹³ In a divergent, entirely legendary tradition,¹⁰⁹⁴ quoted by Ibn al-Muʿazz, we find a very different explanation—that of the *loss* of the only finished copy of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* after al-Ḥallī's death through *burning*.¹⁰⁹⁵ [34] Finally, a tradition reported on the authority of al-Layṭ provides the reason that before his death al-Ḥallī was incapacitated by some *illness*.¹⁰⁹⁶

By referring to the formula *raḥmat Allāh* after al-Ḥallī's name, which occurs at the very beginning of the work,¹⁰⁹⁷ Bräunlich was able to maintain that he might indeed have died before completing the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*. On the other hand, the formula might be pure, if plausible, speculation on the part of Muslim scholars. The (very slight) element of truthfulness in Ibn al-Muʿazz's legendary tradition might be accounted for by the fact that the beginning of the work bears the stamp of al-Ḥallī to a much larger degree than the rest (see above pp. 149–150).

Concerning point 3, we find that opinions differ as to the share of the "authors" of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*. In the following discussion, we will assign the different views to four groups according to the general theory they subscribe to.

- 1 The first group wants to ascribe the plan (or schema) or the structure of the work to al-Ḥallī, but not its execution.
- 2 The second group credits him with a part of the work, mostly the beginning up to the letter *ʿayn*.
- 3 The third group assumes that the whole work or a part of it was dictated.
- 4 The fourth group deals with the question of who wrote or redacted the book.

Group 1

- A tradition reported on the authority of ʿAṭʿab: "al-Ḥaḥlī designed the plan (or scheme) (of the book), but he did not fill in (the rubrics) (*rasama-hu* [sc. the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*] *wa-lam yakhṣa-hu*) ... other scholars completed the book"¹⁰⁹⁸;
- Abū ʿĪ-Ṭayyib: "he arranged the chapters, but died before he had filled in (the rubrics of) the book" (*rattaba ʿabwāba-hu wa-tawaffiya min qabli ʿan yakhṣa-hu*)¹⁰⁹⁹;
- Ḥamzah al-Isfahānī (d. 360/970-971 or earlier): "one of the things he laid the foundations for was the structure of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* (*min taṣṣiṣ-hi bināʾ Kitāb al-ʿayn*), which comprises the language of an entire nation"¹¹⁰⁰;
- [35] al-Azharī: "the foundation of the whole (*taṣṣiṣ al-muḡmal*) at the beginning of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* is by ... al-Ḥaḥlī ..., and accordingly, (al-Layṭ) ibn al-Muzaḥfar finished the book after hearing it from his [sc. al-Ḥaḥlī's] mouth [al-Azharī sums up the consensus of lexicographers of his day]. I know that before al-Ḥaḥlī, nobody had started and designed (*fa-mā ʿassasa-hu wa-rasama-hu*) the like of it"¹¹⁰¹;
- az-Zubayrī: "in all likelihood, it was al-Ḥaḥlī who laid its foundation and 'straightened' the words of the Arabs [i.e. arranged it in an orderly fashion] (*sabbaba ʿaṣla-hu wa-ṭaqqāḥa kalām al-ʿarab*). He died before he had finished it and someone (or: people) who was (were) not his equal(s) in the field took over the completion of the work"¹¹⁰²;
- Ibn Ḡinnī: "If al-Ḥaḥlī worked on it at all, he probably only cast a glance at the work done on this book, but he neither undertook (or supervised) it himself nor wrote or published it [sc. the book]" (*lam yali-hi wa-lā qarrara-hu wa-lā harrara-hu*)¹¹⁰³;
- al-Qifṭī: "it is said that he dictated to him [sc. al-Layṭ] the arrangement (*tartīb*) of the lexicographical *Kitāb al-ʿayn* and indicated the (correct) places in it" (*wa-ʿamla ʿalay-hi fa-mā qṭla tartīb Kitāb al-ʿayn fa ʿl-luḡah wa-saddada fi-hi ʿamākin*)¹¹⁰⁴;
- al-Yamānī: "he dictated to him [sc. al-Layṭ] the arrangement of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*."¹¹⁰⁵

Group 2

- An anonymous tradition (introduced with *qūla*, "it was said"), possibly on the authority of Ibn Durayd: "people say ...: al-Ḥaḥlī sought to accomplish (*ʿamila*) it [sc. the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*] for him [sc. al-Layṭ] and taught him his method (*ʿahḍa-hu tarīqata-hu*). Then, al-Ḥaḥlī died and al-Layṭ finished it"¹¹⁰⁶;
- A tradition according to a certain Ishāq ibn Rāḥawayhī: "Of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, al-Ḥaḥlī had accomplished (*ʿamila*) only the chapter *al-ʿayn*. But al-Layṭ wanted al-Ḥaḥlī's book to find a ready market; he therefore wrote (*fa-sannaḡa*) the rest of the book and called himself 'the companion' (*aḥālī*)"¹¹⁰⁷;

- as-Sīrāfī: "he [sc. al-Ḥaḥlī] accomplished (*ʿamila*) (only) the beginning of the famous *Kitāb al-ʿayn* ..."¹¹⁰⁸;
- al-ʿAskarī: "al-Ḥaḥlī only accomplished (*ʿamila*) part of the book [the consensus of the scholars of al-ʿAskarī's time]; but people also claim that he only accomplished (*ʿamila*) the letter *ʿayn*: an-Naḍr ibn Ṣumayl [d. 203/819] completed it in Ḥurāsān,¹¹⁰⁹ and al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaḥfar and 'Alī ʿbn Sāsān al-Wāsiṭ collaborated with him. To the book, they added correct material (*mā yuḡḏzu*), but also a lot of incorrect material; their intention was to make the book complete"¹¹¹⁰;
- Ibn Ḥallikān: "most experts in lexicography say: the lexicographical [36] *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, the composition of which (*taṣnīf-hu*) is ascribed to al-Ḥaḥlī ibn Aḥmad, was not written by him; he started it, arranged its first sections (*rattaba ʿawāṣila-hu*) and called it '*al-ʿayn*'. He then died and his student an-Naḍr ibn Ṣumayl and his contemporaries completed it. They were: Muʿarrif as-Saḍṣī [d. after 204/819], Naṣr ibn ʿAlī al-Ḡaḥḍamī and others. But what they wrote (*ʿamila-hu*) does not conform to what al-Ḥaḥlī wrote in the beginning. Therefore, they took out of it [sc. the book] whatever al-Ḥaḥlī had written and rewrote the beginning from scratch. This is why it [sc. the book] contains many mistakes, which al-Ḥaḥlī would never have made"¹¹¹¹;
- al-Yamānī: "there are splendid works by him [sc. al-Ḥaḥlī], including the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*. However, he did not complete this work. People say that it was finished by an-Naḍr ibn Ṣumayl"¹¹¹²;
- as-Suyūfī: "this statement by as-Sīrāfī [cf. above!] clearly says that al-Ḥaḥlī did not complete the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* ...: some maintain that he accomplished (*ʿamila*) only a part of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, (namely the section) from the beginning to the letter *ʿayn*; al-Layṭ is said to have finished it. This is why its beginning does not resemble its end."¹¹¹³

Group 3

- A tradition reported on the authority of al-Layṭ: "Then, he [sc. al-Ḥaḥlī] fell ill and I [sc. al-Layṭ] embarked on the pilgrimage.¹¹¹⁴ ... I returned from the pilgrimage and visited him and he had completed all the letters at the beginning of the book. He dictated to me what he retained in his memory and when he was in doubt about something, he told me: 'Ask (the bedouins) about it! And if it is correct, include it!' (It went on like that) until I had finished the book"¹¹¹⁵;
- Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181): "he [sc. al-Ḥaḥlī] dictated the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* to al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaḥfar" (*wa-ʿamla Kitāb al-ʿayn ʿalā ʿl-Layṭ* ...)¹¹¹⁶;
- al-Qifṭī: "it is said that he [sc. al-Ḥaḥlī] dictated to him [sc. al-Layṭ] the arrangement (*tartīb*) of the lexicographical *Kitāb al-ʿayn* and indicated the (correct) places in it ..."¹¹¹⁷;
- al-Yamānī: "he dictated to him [sc. al-Layṭ] the arrangement of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*."¹¹¹⁸

[37] Group 4

- A tradition quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 296/908) and al-Marzubānī: "al-Ḥaṭṭī wanted to give him [sc. his benefactor al-Layṭ] a present worthy of him...; he therefore studiously devoted himself to the composition (*tasnīf*) of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*. He composed it (*ṣamnaḡa-hū*) for al-Layṭ... and nobody else."¹¹¹⁹ Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933): "al-Ḥaṭṭī ibn Aḥmad... composed (*qad ʿallaḡa*) the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*"¹¹²⁰; "ignore what al-Layṭ introduced into al-Ḥaṭṭī's book... because the mistake is al-Layṭ's, not al-Ḥaṭṭī's"¹¹²¹; "al-Ḥaṭṭī left this word out; I think it is a mistake of al-Layṭ."¹¹²² Anonymous tradition (*qūla*), quoted possibly on the authority of Ibn Durayd: "al-Ḥaṭṭī accomplished (*ʿamila*) the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, embarked on the pilgrimage and left the book in Ḥurāsān."¹¹²³
- Al-Azharī (d. 370/980): "al-Layṭ it was who falsely ascribed to al-Ḥaṭṭī ibn Aḥmad the composition (*taʿlif*) of the entire *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, to improve its sale under his name and to arouse the interest of those who were around him."¹¹²⁴
- An-Nawawī (d. 676/1279): "Some scholars credit him [sc. al-Ḥaṭṭī] with the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, some deny it and say: it was portions [of a book by al-Ḥaṭṭī] which al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaʿfar... the companion of al-Ḥaṭṭī, compiled (*kānat muḡallaṭā ḡamaʿa-hā ʿl-Layṭ*). He added and subtracted (material) and ascribed them [sc. the portions or the whole] to al-Ḥaṭṭī, even though the latter is not responsible for it..."¹¹²⁵; "the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* attributed to al-Ḥaṭṭī is (in fact) based on a compilation by al-Layṭ on the authority of al-Ḥaṭṭī" (*huwa min ḡamʿ al-Layṭ ʿan al-Ḥaṭṭī*).¹¹²⁶
- As-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505): "The first to compose a comprehensive lexicographical work (*ṣamnaḡa fī ḡamʿ al-ḡaḡa*) is al-Ḥaṭṭī ibn Aḥmad: he wrote (*ʿallaḡa*) the famous *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* on the subject... but al-Ḥaṭṭī did not finish it;... most people go so far as to deny that it is a work written (redacted) by al-Ḥaṭṭī (*min tasnīf al-Ḥaṭṭī*). Some say: the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* is not by al-Ḥaṭṭī, but by al-Layṭ."¹¹²⁷

In the majority of cases, the reflections and speculations of the medieval scholars are not plucked from the air; rather, they are based on one or more of the following points:

- [38] A more or less detailed scrutiny of the text of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*;
- the (correct) intuition that the plan or idea of such a work can only have been conceived by a genius, namely al-Ḥaṭṭī;
- the adoption or modification of the point of view of a predecessor.

The views taken by al-Azharī and as-Suyūṭī in group (4), but, viewed as a whole, also those expressed by group (1), are tantamount to the position of Brānūnich and our own contemporary notion that al-Ḥaṭṭī was the intellectual father and al-Layṭ the redactor or actual author. Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Ibn Durayd "still" credit al-Ḥaṭṭī

with the composition of the work (*tasnīf*, *taʿlif*), not without (in the case of Ibn al-Muʿtazz; cf. above p. 155 with n. 1095) postulating the loss and reproduction of the original text or pointing out (in the case of Ibn Durayd) (error-ridden) additions by al-Layṭ. Al-Azharī on the other hand correctly observes that the composition or redaction (*tasnīf*) of the text as a whole was *not* accomplished by al-Ḥaṭṭī, but by al-Layṭ. In his *Tahāfīb (Refinement)*, an-Nawawī lists the contradictory views of his predecessors alongside each other.

Al-Azharī makes another astute and possibly accurate claim: he maintains that al-Layṭ falsely ascribed the composition or redaction of the work to al-Ḥaṭṭī. An expression we encounter at the beginning of the work, which a reader cannot (and was not supposed to) interpret other than indicating that the *entire work* was created by al-Ḥaṭṭī,¹¹²⁸ would, then, have originated in all likelihood with al-Layṭ. An-Nawawī is absolutely accurate in proposing that al-Layṭ compiled "portions"—in our terminology: "fragments"—of al-Ḥaṭṭī's book and supplemented them with other material. The originator of this position must have reached it through a careful scrutiny of the introduction to the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*.

The position taken by the exponents of group (2) is correct only in so far as they generally assume that al-Ḥaṭṭī did not finish the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, that is, did not finalize it in all its details. Their claim that he only completed the book up to and including the *Bāb al-ʿayn* is speculation. It could only be justified on the grounds that the beginning of the work, particularly the introduction, contains by far the greatest number of al-Ḥaṭṭī quotations. The chapter on the letter ʿayn—which, however, is the largest chapter of the book (2 volumes out of 8 in the printed edition)—includes substantially more such quotations than the remaining chapters. Thus, it seems as if al-Ḥaṭṭī left his imprint much more on the beginning than on the rest of the work. Still, drawing a line under the letter ʿayn is arbitrary: we do find a number of al-Ḥaṭṭī quotations also *after* the *Bāb al-ʿayn* ("chapter on the letter ʿayn").¹¹²⁹ The scholars in question might have speculated that al-Ḥaṭṭī himself must at least have redacted the eponymous chapter of the book.

[39] Puzzling (and not readily explicable) are two of the reports quoted on p. 157 which name an-Naḍr ibn Šumayl (d. 203/819), a "major" student of al-Ḥaṭṭī, as one of the collaborators in finishing the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, once together with al-Layṭ and a third individual and once without al-Layṭ, but in the company of other "major" students of al-Ḥaṭṭī. This is especially strange since two traditions report that an-Naḍr was not aware of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* or steadfastly refused to recognize it as the work of al-Ḥaṭṭī (see immediately below).¹¹³⁰ Now, contrary to al-Layṭ, an-Naḍr is not even quoted once in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*,¹¹³¹; in this case, we have to admit that an-Naḍr's name cannot have been added to the list of co-authors on the basis of evidence provided by the text itself. The same applies to the other students of al-Ḥaṭṭī: none of them is quoted in the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*.

The originators of these reports might have been unwilling to concede—or considered it impossible—that a scholar whom they regarded as mediocre, namely al-Layṭ, should have the sole honor of finishing one of the most famous works of Arabic literature. Therefore, they either added major students of al-Ḥaṭṭī

such as an-Nadr to the list of redactors or even replaced al-Layʿi with them altogether. Incidentally, the second report (Ibn Ḥalikān) depends on the first (the anonymous tradition quoted by al-ʿAskari), and it is interesting to note that the earlier author at least kept al-Layʿi on the roster together with an-Nadr, while the later author dropped him (or concealed him among the anonymous “others”). Talmon proposes a different explanation by adducing the similarities in the careers of an-Nadr and al-Layʿi: both were students of al-Ḥaḥlī, both lived in Ḥurāsān and—according to the biographical information provided by Abū Ḥamīd¹¹³²—both wrote extensive lexicographical works based on the “book” of Abū Ḥayrah¹¹³³ (d. c. 150/767).¹¹³⁴ Yet, we still do not have an explanation for the fact that, apart from an-Nadr, Ibn Ḥalikān also mentions Muʿarrif and others.

The assumption that the book was based on dictation (made by the exponents of the third group) could rest on formulations such as “if somebody says: . . . respond to him: . . .” (*fa-in qāla ʿl-qāʿil: fa-quʿl la-hū: . . .*) (sic lege; vol. 1, p. 69). They could indeed suggest dictation.¹¹³⁵ But we still do not have any conclusive evidence for this supposition.

[40] We will now discuss those traditions which report that certain scholars, all of them early Basrians, categorically denied that al-Ḥaḥlī was the author of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.

In a tradition quoted by az-Zubaydī on the authority of his teacher Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī (d. 356/967), we read¹¹³⁶:

None of al-Ḥaḥlī’s major students, an-Nadr ibn Šumayl, Muʿarrif, Naṣr ibn ʿAlī, Abū ʿI-Ḥasan al-Aḥṣā and others like them [who in other cases faithfully transmitted the knowledge of their master] knew the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* and nobody had heard (it) from him. It only came to light, from Ḥurāsān,¹¹³⁷ long after their deaths, namely at the time Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī was head of the school in Basrah (c. 250/865).¹¹³⁸ People took no notice of it and nobody sought authorisation to transmit even a single letter from it. Rather, Abū Ḥātim and his companions steadfastly rejected and took no notice of it.

In this context, az-Zubaydī¹¹³⁹/al-Qālī put forward the following two arguments:

- 1 If al-Ḥaḥlī in fact was the author of the book, *these eminent students* would have transmitted the book instead of the obscure al-Layʿi, to say nothing of his being its only transmitter: they would have been much more deserving of this honor.
- 2 If the book had been by al-Ḥaḥlī, it would have been quoted and material from it would have been transmitted by the likes of al-Asmaʿī, al-Yazīdī, and Ibn al-Aʿrābī and by scholars of the following generation such as the *muṣannifūn* Abū Ḥātim, Abū ʿUbayd, and others. “But,” as the tradition maintains, “we

know that in their (own) books, none of them transmitted even a single letter by al-Ḥaḥlī on lexicography.”

According to another tradition,¹¹⁴⁰ an-Nadr ibn Šumayl was asked about the book ascribed to al-Ḥaḥlī. He claimed that he did not know it.¹¹⁴¹ He was then asked: did he perhaps write it after your time (in Basrah)? He replied: I did not leave Basrah before al-Ḥaḥlī was buried.

[41] If we approach the two traditions on the basis of a sceptical attitude towards the Arabic tradition of *ʿaḥbār* (reports), they would have to be seen as no more than a reflection and legendary elaboration of two facts which Bräunlich had already pointed out: first, that the earliest Muslim scholars never designate al-Ḥaḥlī as *al-lugawī*, lexicographer, and second, that old lexicographical works almost never quote lexical (and phonetical), but invariably only grammatical and metrical material by al-Ḥaḥlī.¹¹⁴²

With a less sceptical attitude, it could not be excluded that at least the situation related in the first tradition could have been based on facts.¹¹⁴³ In fact, al-Ḥaḥlī’s major students—and the generation of Basrian linguistic scholars following them—could not have known of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* or even of al-Ḥaḥlī’s *lexicographical activities* in general: unbeknownst to his students, he had begun his drafts for the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*—perhaps with al-Layʿi in Ḥurāsān¹¹⁴⁴—which he had planned as a book for readers. He only talked to a single person, namely, his friend al-Layʿi, about the book and its fragments, but did not discuss it with his “principal” students. Finally, al-Layʿi—and only he—got hold of the fragmentary text. Al-Ḥaḥlī never taught the contents of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, in the usual manner, in public lecture courses, let alone hold systematic lectures about lexicography (and phonetics).¹¹⁴⁵ This also applies to al-Layʿi, who redacted and finished the book and was its actual “author” or at least its compiler.¹¹⁴⁶ In sum: from the very beginning, there was no transmission through lecture courses (*ar-rivāyah al-musmiʿah*)—as it was usually practised at the time—on the authority of al-Ḥaḥlī in the fields of lexicography and phonetics.

IV

Thus, the two arguments put forward by az-Zubaydī/al-Qālī discussed above are incorrect: al-Ḥaḥlī had begun to write the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* but yet did not pass it on to his most eminent students; for understandable reasons, then, al-Asmaʿī, Abū ʿUbayd, and other linguistic scholars of their time did not quote from the book. Az-Zubaydī/al-Qālī, however, are accurate with their observation that there are hardly any traces of al-Ḥaḥlī’s lexicographical and phonetical teachings in the writings of the early Muslim linguistic scholars and lexicographers prior to Ibn Durayd.¹¹⁴⁷ Still, this is not sufficient to disprove that al-Ḥaḥlī was the intellectual creator of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* and that he had started to write it.

[42] Likewise, Danecki's argument fails. He maintained that the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* cannot derive from al-Ḥaṭīl both because his student Sībawayhi never quotes it and because the phonetical system of the latter is independent of and inferior to that of his master. On the contrary, Sībawayhi *could not have known* the book, since al-Ḥaṭīl did not give public lectures on phonetics and lexicography and the finished and edited *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* was circulated only long after Sībawayhi's death. As a consequence, he could neither have quoted it nor been influenced by al-Ḥaṭīl's ideas. Danecki deserves credit for incontrovertibly establishing that al-Ḥaṭīl's system was superior to that of Sībawayhi; yet, he errs by concluding from the differences in the technical merits of their respective systems that one must have been developed earlier than the other and then proceeding to claim on chronological grounds that the allegedly later system—that of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*—could not have been created by al-Ḥaṭīl.

Finally, a few words about the opinions of the Arab editors of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, who believe that al-Ḥaṭīl wrote the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* from beginning to end.

Like their medieval predecessors, these scholars, on the basis of a correct intuition, rightly infer that idea and plan of the work and large parts of the text must be the intellectual property of al-Ḥaṭīl. Since they were not sufficiently familiar both with the characteristic features of the early Arabo-Islamic transmission through lecture courses and with modern European source-critical methods, they do not fully recognize the difference between "intellectual creator" on the one hand and "author" or "redactor" on the other. This is an important distinction for many works of classical Arabic literature. Overwhelmed by the sheer genius of al-Ḥaṭīl's design, they wrongly conclude that the work shaped according to this design, "a landmark, not only in Arabic lexicography, but in the history of world lexicography,"¹¹⁴⁸ must also have been written in its entirety by al-Ḥaṭīl.

In this study, I hope to have again—and this time conclusively—demonstrated that al-Ḥaṭīl was *not* the author (i.e. the compiler or redactor) of the extant *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, even though he is its intellectual creator and large parts of the work are based on his teachings.

Further, it has been shown that al-Ḥaṭīl had already begun to write the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*: we have found written fragments by al-Ḥaṭīl in the text known to us today, both in the introduction and the dictionary proper. For whatever reason, al-Ḥaṭīl did not execute, let alone finish the work. His collaborator and apparently also the person who executed, redacted, and finished the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* was al-Layṭ ibn al-Muzaffar. It was he who probably compiled the vast majority of the extant work. Thus, al-Layṭ must be regarded as its actual author.

[43] If al-Ḥaṭīl had finished the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*, he would have been the author of the first proper book in the history of the Arabo-Islamic sciences. Since this was not the case and since the edited *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* only "appeared" much later, this honor belongs to his student Sībawayhi. Consequently, his book on grammar was fittingly called *a-Kiṭāb*, "the Book" (par excellence).

Addendum

P. 220, n. 1119 and p. 161, IV

The first author who can be demonstrated as having used the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn* was not Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933), as Talmon argued, but Abū Ḥanīfah ad-Dīnawarī (d. 282/895) in his *Kiṭāb an-nabāt* (*The Book on Botany*); see Bauer (1988, p. 236 ff.). However, Abū Ḥanīfah does not mention al-Ḥaṭīl as the author of the *Kiṭāb al-ʿayn*; quotations from the work are introduced by the expression *qāla baʿd ar-rūwāt* ("one of the transmitters said"). See Bauer (1988, p. 242 f.).

GLOSSARY

The majority of items included in this Glossary are given in translation (usually in an abbreviated form) in the body of the text, after the relevant Arabic word. The information provided here is intended to supplement and amplify those renderings.

ʔadab According to the context, "good breeding," "manners," "culture," "refinement," "belles-lettres"; an approach to the organization of knowledge typical of the literary and linguistic sciences and characterized by a concern for the manner in which the information is presented.

ʔadib pl. ʔudabā Man of learning specializing in the literary and linguistic sciences, a "gentleman."

ʔahl al-ʔilm The community of scholars, especially religious scholars.

ʔallaḡa To compose (sc. a book).

ʔan A preposition characteristically used in a chain of authorities (*ʔisnād*) to denote the source of the information being relayed.

ʔarabīyah "Pure" Arabic, especially the language of the Qurʾān and ancient Arabic poetry.

ʔarḡ "Presentation," a method of transmission similar to *qirʔah*.

ʔawāʔil A class of writings that deals with the question of distinguishing "who was the first" to write a certain book, perform a certain action, or achieve some feat or other.

ʔayyām al-ʔarab The (battle-)days of the Arabs, a term used to denote the accounts of the tribal conflicts that characterized Arabian society before the advent of Islam.

daḡīr pl. daḡāʔir A notebook or jotter.

dīwān pl. dawāwīn (1) an administrative office, council, chancellery; or (2) a collection, especially of poems.

falsafah Arabic philosophy which takes as its starting point the philosophical heritage of Late Antiquity (in Greek) as it was translated into Arabic during the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries.

fiqh Scientific study of the Divine Law, the *ṣarʔah*.

ḡāʔīyah "The age of ignorance [sc. of Islam]," the standard Muslim designation for the pre-Islamic period.

gramma pl. grammata (Greek) A text composed within a school or group for the sole and exclusive use by members of that school or group.

ḡabar pl. ʔaḡbār A report, anecdote, or item of information, the arrangement of which is characteristic of the type of writings known as *ʔadab*; often used as an alternative to *ḡadīḡ*, when this latter is used in its technical sense of (Prophetic) tradition.

ḡadīḡ Literally a "saying," a tradition about the Prophet Muhammad or one of his Companions; the whole corpus or the genre of such traditions.

ḡalaḡa pl. ḡalaḡāt A circle or group of individuals gathered together for the purposes of study and teaching.

Ḥarīḡīes (ḡawāriḡ) Members of the earliest religious sect in Islam; originally Muslim warriors who "left" (*ḡaraḡa*) the army of the fourth caliph 'Alī ʔbn Abī Ṭālib (r. 35-40/656-660), in protest against his decision to arbitrate with the then governor of Greater Syria, Muʾāwiyah, the first Umayyad caliph (r. 41-60/661-680). Their vision of the Islamic community, pursued largely by means of military activity, throughout the first three Islamic centuries, was uncompromising and revolutionary, though *Ḥarīḡism* also developed a quietist branch.

Ḥiḡẓah The "exodus" of Muhammad and the first Muslims from their hometown of Mecca to the town of Yatrib (Medina) in the year 622 AD, an event which is considered to represent the foundation of the Islamic community; and from which the Muslim calendar is dated.

ḡipponmēma pl. ḡipponmēmata (Greek) Notes, note-book, or aide-mémoire.

ḡiḡẓah Authorization to transmit, sometimes granted by a letter, on which occasion the student is not obliged to spend time with the teacher.

ḡiḡẓat as-samāʔ A written authorization or endorsement attached to a book attesting that the work has been "audited," that is, received via *samāʔ*.

ʔilm Knowledge, science; frequently synonymous with knowledge of the *Ḥadīḡ*.

ʔilm al-ʔarab "The science of the Arabs," that is, poetry.

ʔimlāʔ pl. ʔamālī Dictation; dictation session.

ʔrāb The system of vowel-endings (desinential inflection) characteristic of the *ʔarabīyah*.

ʔisnād Lit. an act of supporting, whence a chain of transmitters, particularly with reference to the list of authorities, arranged by generation, guaranteeing a Prophetic or another tradition.

Kaʔbah The building in Mecca which is called the house of Allāh on earth.

kalam Islamic theology, a discipline involving close argumentation based upon the methods of dialectic and logic.

kātib pl. kuttib A scribe or state secretary.

kitāb Any piece of writing, such as a letter, note, contract, book, or inscription.

kitābah A method of transmission involving the production of a written copy of a work. See also *wiḡādah*.

luḡah Language.

luḡawī pl. luḡawīyūn A lexicographer, one who specializes in *luḡah*, language.

- madrāsah pl. madāris* An institution of study, later predominantly for the study of law.
- maǧlis pl. maǧālis* A session convened for the purposes of discussion or instruction.
- main pl. mutūn* The text of any *ḥadīṭ*, usually introduced by an *isnād*.
- mawla pl. mawālī* A "client," that is, a non-Arab who upon conversion to Islam was granted the protection of the tribe of an individual who "sponsored" the convert as patron.
- miḥnah* A trial or test; the "Inquisition," initiated by the caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 198-218/813-833), and continued by his two immediate successors, al-Mu'tasim (r. 218-227/833-842) and al-Wāṣiq (r. 227-232/842-847), designed to establish caliphal authority in matters of religious belief by focusing on the issue of whether the Qur'ān is created or eternal.
- mu'allaqah* Literally a "suspended" ode; one of the 7, or 10, most celebrated pre-Islamic odes which according to legend were written in gold on banners and suspended from the walls of the *Ka'bah*.
- muḍakarrah* Literally, "consultation," "learning," "memorizing"; an informal exchange of *ḥadīṭs* among students, characterized by recapitulation and review.
- muḥaḍḍam pl. muḥaḍḍamūn* A poet whose lifetime spanned both the waning of the *gāhiliyyah* (the age before Islam) and the advent of Islam.
- muḥarrif* Someone who has not studied with at least two experienced masters.
- munāwalaḥ* A method of transmission in which the teacher entrusts his pupil with his autograph manuscript or a collated copy.
- Murǧi'ite* Someone whose beliefs and lifestyle are characterized by the doctrines typical of the political and theological movement known as *ṭiǧā'*, chief among which was the tenet that faith was defined exclusively in terms of the expression of belief and did not involve any consideration of the actions of a believer.
- muṣannaf pl. muṣannaḡaṭ* A work arranged systematically into thematic chapters.
- muṣannif pl. muṣannifūn* A compiler of a *muṣannaḡ*.
- muṣṣaḡ pl. muṣṣaḡif* A copy or "codex" of the Qur'ān.
- muṣṣaḡiṭ pl. muṣṣaḡiṭyūn* A scholar who has only studied the Qur'ān from the codices (*muṣṣaḡif*).
- musnad pl. masānid* A work in which the traditions are organized by the name of the Companions of the Prophet who transmitted them originally; the companions are often arranged chronologically, in terms of the date of their conversion to Islam.
- Murazīne* Someone whose beliefs and life-style are characterized by the doctrines typical of the theological movement known as *ṭiǧā'*, chief among which were the notions of the indivisible unity of Allāh (whence an abhorrence of any form of anthropomorphism), a commitment to the unqualified justness of Allāh (whence their distinctive brand of moral and divine responsibility).

- and a conviction that a rational (and reasonable) account of human and divine existence must be possible.
- naḥw* Grammar, linguistics.
- naḥwī pl. naḥwīyyūn* A grammarian, linguist.
- nasīb* The section of a polythematic ode, usually at, or near, the beginning of the poem, the tone of which is characterized by a melancholy sense of loss.
- Qadari'ite* A derogatory term for those theologians who maintained that evil is man's doing and that man has the freedom to choose between good and evil.
- qaṣṣyah pl. qawāṣi'* The final rhyme of any verse of poetry.
- qaw' pl. qurra'* Lit. a reader, whence a "reciter" of the Qur'ān, and in particular one of the seven scholars who advocated his own version ("reading") of the text of the Qur'ān which subsequently became sanctioned as authoritative.
- qaṣīdah pl. qaṣā'id* A long, often polythematic poem, considered to be the highest form of creative composition in verse and especially typical of the pre-Islamic period.
- qirā'ah* Recitation, a method of transmission in which a student reads a text in the presence of a teacher.
- qirṭās pl. qurātīs* A papyrus or parchment.
- qir'ah* Lit. a piece or a morsel; a short poem or "fragment."
- qiyās* A rule or reasoning according to a set of rules; in grammar, analogical deductions.
- rāwī pl. ruwāt* A transmitter, an individual entrusted with reciting and transmitting the compositions of a poet.
- rāwiyah pl. rāwiyat* (1) a *rāwī'*, and (2) a scholarly transmitter of poetry.
- ray pl. yarā'* Lit. a "view," a personal juridical opinion, a type of legal reasoning which did not involve dependence upon a Prophetic precedent.
- risālah pl. rasā'il* Letter, epistle.
- riwāyah* Transmission of knowledge; a chain of transmission at the beginning of a book (referred to as an introductory *isnād*).
- ar-riwāyah al-masnu'ah* Heard ("audited") or aural transmission, involving the method of *sanā'at*.
- riwāyah bi-l-lafṣ* Lit. "transmission through words," that is, verbatim transmission; a method of transmission in which the wording of a text is scrupulously respected.
- riwāyah bi-l-ma'nā* Lit. "transmission through meaning or sense"; a method of transmission in which only the sense of the text is preserved.
- ṣaḥīḡah pl. ṣuḥuḡ* A sheet of writing material.
- ṣaḥīr* A poet.
- sanā'at* Audition; a method of transmission in which a pupil listens to ("audits") a text recited by a teacher; certificate or endorsement of "audition," attesting to the study of a text according to this method.
- ṣarḥ pl. šurūḥ* Commentary.
- ṣayḥ pl. šuyūḥ* Elder, tribal chief, teacher, or master.
- ṣayḡan pl. ṣayāḡīn* A demon ("satan"), the source of poetic inspiration.

- Ṣīrī** A member of the community of believers known as *Ṣīrī al-ʿAlī*, the party of 'Alī bn Abī Tālib, the fourth caliph, nephew, and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, whom the *Ṣīrī* believe was appointed by Muḥammad as his immediate successor. The focal and defining beliefs of the *Ṣīrī* are their adherence to the Imāmate (spiritual leadership) and the enduring role of divine inspiration in the Imām's leadership of the community; according to the *Ṣīrī*, the Imāmate is the exclusive preserve of the family of the Prophet through his daughter Fātimah and her husband 'Alī bn Abī Tālib.
- ṣīrah** A biography, often used to refer to the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad; popular, folk epic.
- ṣūḥufī pl. ṣūḥufiyyūn** An individual whose learning has been acquired exclusively from books.
- sunnah** Customary practice or procedure; any practice authorized by its agreement with the words and deeds of the Prophet Muḥammad (or with those of his Companions and the successor generation) as established by the *Ḥadīṭ*, the priority of which is typical of beliefs and lifestyle known as Sunnism.
- Sunnī** Someone who adheres to Sunnism, the principal belief system within Islam which is centered upon the consensus of the scholars (*ʿulamaʾ*) as to what constitutes the *sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad; its principal religious and political tenet is that the death of Muḥammad meant the end of infallible guidance of the Islamic community. This emphasis on consensus led to the recognition of a diversity of schools (*madāhib*) of law, of which four have predominated (Mālikism, Hanafism, Šāfi'ism, and Hanbalism).
- ṣūrah** A chapter of the Qur'ān.
- synggramma pl. synggrammata (Greek)** A literary work, a "book" in the true sense of the term.
- taḥrīs** A method of teaching characteristic of the *madrāsah*.
- tadwīn** The official collection, or collection on a large scale, of any group of cognate materials, such as poetry or the *Ḥadīṭ*.
- tafsīr** Exegesis, Qur'ānic commentary.
- ṭalab al-ʿilm** Travel undertaken in the search for knowledge, that is, *Ḥadīṭ*.
- taʿlīf** The act of composition (*ʿallafā*); a compilation, a literary work.
- taʿrīf pl. taʿrīf** Lit. extremes or tips, that is, written notes recording only the beginning and end of a *ḥadīṭ*.
- taṣrīf** A method of presenting knowledge which consisted of classifying items in a systematic fashion in books (*kutub*) subdivided into chapters: cf. *muṣannaf*.
- wiḡāḍah** A method of transmission restricted to the use of a copy of a text (see also *kitābah*).

NOTES

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 1 Some of these points are rehearsed in Montgomery (2004a).
- 2 On Ḥumayn, see G. Strohmaier, *Et*², vol. 3, pp. 578–581; on Muḡulīyā, a professor of Ḥanafī law, see A. S. Hamdan, art. *Muḡulīyā*, *Et*², vol. 7, p. 350.
- 3 Gutas and Biesterfeldt (1984, p. 55).
- 4 On Yahyā, see Endress (1977). The treatise has been edited with a French translation by Vincent Mistrith: Yahyā 'bn 'Adī (1981) and ably studied by Sidney Griffith (forthcoming). An English translation of a cognate text by Yahyā, *The Reformation of Morals*, is available. See Yahyā 'bn 'Adī (2002). Kraemer (1986a,b) are brilliant recreations of this most brilliant period in Islamic intellectual life.
- 5 Compare Reisman's bold and determined effort to untangle the complex and very messy textual tradition of the collection of Ibn Sīnā's correspondence with his students: Reisman (2002).
- 6 I have analyzed one case of this in Montgomery (2005).
- 7 Reading, with Rosen, *muṣannaf* for *muḍḍīf*.
- 8 Reading *muṣṣab* *uḡrā* for *muṣṣab* *ʿaṣṣi-hi*. The point is that the copies which include the Caliphate of ar-Rādī (322–329/934–940) are preferable because they contain additions later to that version of the history which ended with the caliphate of al-Qāḥir (320–322/932–934) and Sa'īd's own patriarchate (in 321/933). The reading of the manuscript would contradict the explanation that the continuator gives for the diversity, by implying that these later additions, covering a part of the reign of ar-Rādī and stopping some three years before Sa'īd's death—and which the continuator wants to include!—were not contained in the original which extended to shortly before Sa'īd's death in 328/939–940!
- 9 Yahyā 'bn Sa'īd (1924, pp. 709.5–710.4).
- 10 This process of multiple authorization continued for many centuries. Thus, Wilkan (1988) in his attempt to edit a work by Ibn al-Akṭāmī (d. 749/1348), discovered the very impracticality (or perhaps better the impossibility) of constructing a stemma on the classical model.
- 11 (1991, p. 214): generally pp. 207–241. See also the comments of Whitmarsh (2004, pp. 26–29), such as

the controlling metaphor for stemmatic criticism is genealogical: the family of manuscripts is conceived of as a patriarchal dynasty, "Contamination" is, arguably, a highly judgemental term, implying an adulterous pollution of the bloodline. The theory of stemmatics invokes normative morality, as though exhorting the textual family to legitimate reproduction.

- 12 This is the phenomenon of *réécriture*, central to the study of which are the concept of the "soft" text and a response to orality and literacy not as a polarity of opposites but rather as a dialectic of options realized through various processes of memory. Examples of the range of methodological approaches accommodated by this grouping are contained in a collection of articles that stem from a conference (1995) held before the grouping was "officially" instituted (1996) but published after its institution. Hen and Innes (2000). See the Introduction by Matthew Innes, "Using the Past: Interpreting the Present, Influencing the Future," pp. 1–8, and the comments of Walter Pohl, "Memory, Identity and Power in Lombard Italy": "the nineteenth-century editions of the MGH [*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*] volumes of the *Scriptores Rerum Langobardorum* and the *Leges Langobardorum* did an excellent job, but they tried to reduce the multiplicity of textual variants to an *Urtex* so that the actual manuscript traditions, the many-faceted process of *réécriture*, were obscured" (p. 11); "the surviving texts are traces of a plurality of writings. Totalizing concepts of historical memory are no use in describing them" (p. 23). On "soft" texts, see Innes (1998). I would like to record my gratitude to Professor Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge) for introducing me to this forum.

- 13 Thus, Gutas and Bisterfeldt (1984) use a stemma to locate variation, while the stemma constructed for the *Annates Regni Francorum* and its codex enable Rosamond McKitterick to "point to a positive engagement with the text on the part of scribe and compiler" and to demonstrate how "the message of the *Annates* is to be understood not just as the clever construction it once was, whose original text is unrecoverable, but also a collaborative piece of image-making by many Frankish scribes over a number of decades" ("Political Ideology in Carolingian Historiography." In Hen and Innes [2000, pp. 170 ff.]).

- 14 See Günther (2002).

- 15 This brief discussion of GS's publications is not exhaustive and will give priority to works available in English. For a list of works published since 1996, see <http://www.unibas.ch/orientsem/111.htm>. They include cultural and religious history, the history of philosophy, Arabic rhetoric (see e.g. his article *Tarst'*, *El*², vol. 10, pp. 304 ff.), Persian literature, and the history of Oriental Studies in Switzerland.

- 16 Thus, GS and I have endeavored to assure that references to Arabic are translated throughout and to refer the reader to alternative English-language scholarship in those cases where GS originally referred to works in German. We have also aspired to provide renderings of the titles of Arabic works which are as concise as possible. This has not proved an easy task and it has afforded us much thought. Indeed, in one or two cases the obscurity of the titles has defeated us—we beg the reader's leave not to identify them, beseech reviewers to assist us in the resolution of this difficulty, and refer the interested reader to the amusing and perceptive article on the problem by G. M. Wickens (1989). There are two features of this work for which we make no apology: the (admittedly at times cumbersome) inclusion of dates given according to both the Muslim and the Christian calendar (the use of the *hijrī* [i.e. Muslim] dating system also allows us to retain the right to use AD rather than the now standard CE); and the application of a rigorous transliteration system. In a work which sets so much store by the precise use of accurate terminology, the customary nod to reader friendliness, which the abandonment of transliteration has come to represent, did not seem at all appropriate.

- 17 There are many ways in which a survey of complementarities such as this can be written. Thus, Schoeler (2002a) is a veritable history of the formative period of Arabo-Islamic writings composed from the point of view of the interface between written and oral. Perhaps the most famous (in Anglo-American scholarship) is the compartmentalization into four rival cultural orientations championed by Marshall

- Hodgson (1974) in the first volume of his influential three-volume work, *The Venture of Islam. Conscience and History in a World Civilization. I: The Classical Age of Islam*: "the Shar'ī Islamic Vision" (pp. 315–358); "Muslim Personal Piety: Confrontations with History and with Selfhood" (pp. 359–409, in which Sufism is included); "Speculation: Falsafah and Kalām" (pp. 410–443); and "Adab: the Bloom of Arabic Literary Culture" (pp. 444–472). In many ways, this work has inspired a view of classical Islamic civilization as a series of discrete contestations for legitimacy. These struggles for legitimacy, however, should by no means blind us to the existence of these (and other) cultural orientations as a series of choices and inflections at the disposal of an individual Muslim. Let us take from one volume (Berg 2003) just a few more examples of how these relations have been understood: for John Burton, disjunction is at the heart of his vision of how the Arabo-Islamic disciplines originally related to one another (2003), while Christopher Melchert (2003) considers many of these matters from the point of view of Islamic legal thought with a degree of skepticism. There is, it should be noted, nothing in this survey which is essentially at variance with the (controversial) views put forward by John Wansbrough (2003), for we are contesting versions of *mimesis* (and not recreations of historical verities).

- This brief snapshot is devoted solely to those aspects of the Islamic Sciences which GS's work touches immediately upon. Therefore, I have not discussed Sī'ism or Sufism. Interested readers are referred to Kohlberg (2003), for the first of these, and to Sells (1996) and Knysh (1999) for the second.

- 18 A brief overview of calligraphy and the forms of the Arabic script is given by Tabbaa (2001). The intellectual and spiritual aspects of the scribal tradition and writing practices in the pre- and early-Islamic period are explored by George (2003).

- 19 It is worth remembering just how seminal the Germanic tradition of "source-criticism" in Biblical Studies was, from which it spread into Islamic Studies. Many of the great nineteenth century Orientalists straddled both camps, as, for example, Julius Wellhausen.

- 20 See al-Azmeñ (1992) and Graham (1992–1993).

- 21 On this, see further Schoeler (2002b, p. 3); Sprenger (1856a, b, pp. 5 ff.; and 1869, vol. 3, pp. xciii ff.).

- 22 Goldzher (1890 = 1971 and 1896b), Conrad (1993) may be of interest.

- 23 Sezgin (1967–). The volumes produced by Sezgin when GS published these articles cover: Islamic Sciences (I: Qur'anic Sciences, Hadīf, History, Jurisprudence, Mysticism); Poetry (II); the Natural Sciences (III: Medicine, Pharmacology, Zoology, Veterinary Medicine; IV: Alchemy, Chemistry, Botany, Agriculture); Mathematics (V); Astronomy (VI); Astrology and Meteorology (VII); Lexicography (VIII); and Grammar (IX). The terminus for their coverage is 430/1038–1039. The next three volumes, on Mathematical Geography and Cartography, appeared in 2000, published by the Institut für die Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität.

- 24 Such a polarity is informed by the "hard" thesis of literacy as technologizing: see Ong (1982), Innes (1998).

- 25 His stance on the issue of authenticity, one which he describes as a modified continuation of the "positivist" (however qualified), as opposed to the hypercritical, approach, is conveniently summed up in Schoeler (2002b, pp. 10–14). It is elaborated with beautiful concision in Schoeler (1996a), an English translation of which is scheduled to appear after the publication of this work, and is further defended in (2002a) and (2003). See also (1998) and (2000b), together with his article *ʿUrwā h. al-Zubayr* in *El*², vol. 10, pp. 910–913. In (2002b) the fundamental distinction between genuineness, accuracy, and historical veracity (a distinction which is often lost in the heat of polemic and controversy) is made: a tradition may be genuine, but

its genuineness is no guarantee of either its accuracy or veracity. Indeed accuracy is no such guarantee either, for it may simply be an accurate representation of the information which a transmitter has been provided or of what a transmitter thinks happened (and thus has no direct connection with what "actually" happened).

26 See Gutas (1998).

27 There is an excellent collection of articles devoted to the ancient Aristotelian commentators by Sorabji (1990). See also the series of translations of the work of the commentators under the general editorship of Richard Sorabji, *The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle*.

28 Gutas (1983, 1985, 1994, 1999) and Lameer (1997). Stroumsa (1991) is a dissenting voice.

29 See the study by Carter (2004); Versteegh (1997, pp. 36–51: "Šibawayhi and the Beginnings of Arabic Grammar").

30 There are several valuable studies of al-Ḥaḥlī in Rydning (1998).

31 Elsewhere, as in 2002b, pp. 31–41, GS notes parallels between other Islamic disciplines, such as philology discussed in Chapter 2 or the science of the "readings" (*qirā'āt*) of the Qur'ān, discussed in Chapter 3. As far as I am aware he does not explicitly propose a formative chronology, or assert that one discipline, *ḥadīth* for example, exerted a preponderant influence on its cognates such as philology or *qirā'āt*. It is quite possible that importation of the *isnād* into the discipline of the *ḥadīth* is itself a (comparatively) late phenomenon.

32 Ibn al-Ṭayyib's logical compendium on the *Ḥisāg* of Porphyry (d. c. 305) has been translated into English. See Ibn al-Ṭayyib (1979).

33 For an English translation of Ibn Būḥār's text, see Schacht and Meyerhof (1937a). See also Savage-Smith (1996, p. 927). For an example of a treatise by Ibn Rūdāwān translated into English see Dols (1984).

34 In Montgomery (1997b) I have presented a series of arguments for understanding that the next stage in the development of this tradition is to move from the level of revising (improving) the word or the verse to revising (improving) the very structure of the polythematic poems which characterize the period.

35 Adherence to this tradition of progress was so acute in the case of Ibn Ḥawqal that his geography is virtually a verbatim quotation of the work of his predecessor al-Isṭaḥrī.

36 The key passage is 183b16–184b8. *The Sophistici Elenchi* was translated quite early on (by Ibn Nā'imah al-Himsī [fl. c. 215/830], among others). A number of Syriac versions existed prior to its Arabic realization. See Gutas (1988, pp. 202 ff. and 219 ff. and 2003, p. 154 f.) for its importance in reading Avicenna; for further instances of the adoption of this conception of progress, see Montgomery (2005, p. 188, geography) and (forthcoming, for its role in al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-musiqa l-kabīr* [the *Major Treatise on Music*]).

37 Compare also the appeal (especially to Arabo-Islamic Neoplatonism) of the analogous conceptualization of theory and practice formulated, on the basis of Aristotelian precedents, as "the first in thought is the last in action": Stern (1962). Stern's ascription of the saying to Philoponus has been refuted by Zimmernan (1986), p. 227, n. 6. I owe this point to Garth Fowden.

38 Toorawa (2004). The same holds true for the presumed and oft-intoned antipathy which obtained between the "ancient sciences" (*ʿulūm qadīma*) typified by *falasfa* (Arabic philosophy of Hellenic inspiration) and the Islamic sciences (*ʿulūm ʿislāmīyah*): see the remarks of Gutas (2002).

39 On these typically jurisprudential concepts, see generally Weiss (1998).

40 This is the spiritual dimension of the introductory *riwāyāt*, which are contained in many manuscripts and which can fulfil a religious and cultural function similar to that highlighted above for the *isnād* within the *ḥadīth*. It is also distinctly manifest in

the chains of *qirā'āt* which provide an individual scholar's genealogy of knowledge. Thus, for example, Ibn al-Akfānī (d. 749/1348) can trace his intellectual lineage back some three centuries to Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037): see Shihadeh (2005, pp. 153 ff.). Michael Cooperson (2000) explores an extension of this notion (the claim to be the heir to the Prophet) in classical Arabic biographical writing.

41 On these issues see Brisson (1998); see also Hadot (1995, pp. 147–178: "The Figure of Socrates").

42 See Madigan (2001) for an intriguing and challenging survey of the terms used in the Qur'ān to refer to the Qur'ān.

43 Berques (1995) makes a point, which I find compelling, that the finally edited form of the Qur'ān may be a faithful recreation of the experience of the Prophet and his nascent community of receipt of Revelation, pieced over the course of two decades—a convergence of "the chronological and the synchronal" (p. 24).

44 *Ġāhili* is an epithet applied to this period by Muslim scholars to denote the period prior to the revelation of the Qur'ān to Muḥammad, when man was "ignorant" of knowledge of Islam. The noun derived therefrom is *ġāhiliyyah*, the age of "ignorance." Western scholars have largely accepted the designation, though they have preferred to discern in it an antonym to the pre-Islamic virtue of *ḥilm*, manly self-control, and wise restraint.

The other publication referred to is Monroe (1972), whose article appeared in the third volume of the newly founded *Journal of Arabic Literature*. Monroe (1983) was subsequently to attempt to apply his version of the theory to the poetry of the *Siḥab ṣabawīyah*, the Prophetic Biography of Muḥammad. The lack of success of this article with material which might have seemed more responsive to a formative approach is telling. More disturbing, however, is the recent obdurate persistence among a number of scholars of this seemingly indefensible "oral poetry" conception of pre-Islamic poetry.

45 It remains unclear, though, just how representative these poets were of *ġāhili* poetic practice in general. It is to be remembered that al-Ḥuṭay'ah formed a link in the chain of transmitters which stretched back through and beyond Zuhayr, and that in the case of this inter-tribal chain of *rawāʾ* "it seems to be the exception rather than the rule that *all* members . . . were poets" (n. 666).

46 On the limitations of such an approach to poetry, see Montgomery (forthcoming).

47 A translation of GS's original article (which appeared in 1989, the year in which the article translated as Chapter 2 was also published) has appeared in Motzki (2004, pp. 67–108). It has been translated afresh for this book.

48 GS provides a brief outline (with references) of this formal mechanism, on page 130. See further Motzki (2004, pp. xxi–xxix and xxxvii–xlii) and al-Azami (1996, pp. 154–205 [Chapter 8]). The parameters of its application have been much refined since Juybol's revisions and have been used in combination with *maṭn*-appreciation with a considerable measure of success. A dissenting voice remains that of Michael Cook.

49 The organizational approach known as *tasnīf* (arrangement of works by systematic and thematic divisions) forms the subject of Chapter 5 of Schoeler (2002b).

50 Muslim tradition gives the credit for this to Ḥiṣām's predecessor, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, proverbial for his piety: see pp. 123–124.

51 See further Schoeler (2002b, p. 55, and note 80, p. 141; and Chapter 5, especially pp. 71–89).

52 See Schoeler (2002b, pp. 82 ff.).

53 See further Schoeler (2002b, pp. 91–107).

54 A word in Arabic is constructed out of 3, 4, or 5 root (radical) consonants. Thus, the student requires an awareness of the basic principles of morphology in Arabic before she can consult a dictionary.

- 55 A. S. Tritton, sometime Professor of Arabic at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, notoriously tried to describe the sound of this consonant in the section of his *Teach Yourself Arabic* (London, 1943) on the alphabet as follows: the *ayn* is

pronounced with... tightening of the throat and forcing up of the larynx. The feeling in the throat is suggestive of slight retching. If you pronounce English vowels with a tightened throat and squeezed larynx, producing a metallic, rather low-pitched voice, they will be near to Arabic vowels in the neighbourhood of this consonant!

- 56 For the range of classificatory schemes available in the lexicographical tradition, see Carter (1990).
57 A similar paradigm of progress was adopted by Norman Calder (1993) for the dating of early juridical texts. It has been roundly refuted by Lowry (2004).

1 THE TRANSMISSION OF THE SCIENCES IN EARLY ISLAM: ORAL OR WRITTEN?

- 58 Additional material can be found in Schoeler (1986), my review of Werkmeister (1983).
59 Abbott (1957–1972).
60 Sezgin (1967–); the title of Sezgin's magnum opus means, "The History of Arabic Writing."
61 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 82 ff.); cf. p. 178, n. 132.
62 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 19 ff., 58, 399).
63 These claims have mostly been made on the basis of Goldziher (1890, especially vol. 2, pp. 194–202) [= (1971, vol. 2, pp. 181–188)].
64 Staath (1969), Leemhuis (1981). Additional examples: Muqātil ibn Sulaymān's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Commentary on the Qur'ān), a later redaction of the original text with added material from other transmitters (cf. Sezgin, 1967–, vol. 1, p. 37 and Wansbrough 1977, pp. 122 ff. and especially pp. 143 ff.); *az-Zuhri's Naṣṣ al-Qur'ān* (Abrogation in the Qur'ān), either a carelessly transmitted and extended recension of the original work or a later compilation drawn from earlier sources (cf. Rippin, 1984, 1981, and Goldfield, 1981).
65 U. Sezgin (1981; cf. also 1971, pp. 56 ff. and especially 58, 111 ff.).
66 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 79, l. 5; p. 82, l. 13); cf. also Staath (1969, p. 229).
67 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 82).
68 Al-Samuk (1978, especially p. 165).
69 Werkmeister (1983, especially pp. 463 ff.).
70 al-Haṭīb al-Baghdādī (1931, vol. 1, p. 221); Ibn Sa'd (1904–1906, vol. 3, l. p. xxv). Cf. Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 1, pp. 89 ff.) and Al-Samuk (1978, p. 149, 152, 162 n.) as well as n. 119 and 130.
71 Fleischhammer (1979, p. 53); the article is a revised version of chapter 4 of Fleischhammer (1965) = Fleischhammer (2004). Similar views have been voiced by Zolondek (1960, p. 218) and can already be found in Blachère (1952–1966, p. 136).
72 Cf. n. 100.
73 For this and the following, cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 58 ff.); Vajda (1983, pp. 2 ff.); Ahmed (1968, pp. 93 ff.); Makdisi (1981, pp. 140 ff.); and Weisweiler (1952, p. 8/Arab., 14/Germ.).
74 Makdisi (1981, pp. 10 ff.), Ahmed (1968, pp. 112 ff.).

- 75 The distinction between these two methods, unknown at an early stage, seems to have been drawn at a later date, cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 59, 61).
76 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 61 ff., 69; vol. 2, p. 29).
77 Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, pp. 9 ff., 194, 196) [= (1971, vol. 2, pp. 22 ff., 181 ff.)].
78 Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, pp. 10 ff.).
79 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 62 ff.).
80 See Chapter 5.
81 Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, pp. 180, 211 ff., 234, 245 ff.) [= (1971, vol. 2, pp. 168 ff., 195 ff., 216 ff., 226 ff.)]. Cf. also Staath (1969, pp. 55 ff. and especially 57 ff.).
82 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 54 ff.).
83 Goldziher (1890) [= (1971)] placed the first *ḥadīṭ* collections (*muṣanṣafāt*, that is, works systematically arranged into thematic chapters) in the third/ninth century and maintained that they were based mainly on oral sources. His results manifestly exerted considerable influence on the theories of subsequent Orientalists concerning the creation and development of other Islamic sciences (e.g. historiography, philology), cf. U. Sezgin (1971, pp. 3 ff.).
84 Numerous examples in Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 70 ff.; vol. 2, pp. 29 ff.) and Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, pp. 61, especially n. 257); cf. also Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, pp. 197, 212) [= (1971, vol. 2, pp. 183 ff., 196 ff.)].
85 For example, *ad-Dahabī* (1963, vol. 2, p. 153), quoting Ahmad ibn Hanbal and al-Haṭīb al-Baghdādī (1931, vol. 13, p. 475). On the subject, cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 57—against Goldziher); on the individual, *ibid.*, pp. 91 ff. [See W. Raven, art. *Sa'īd b. Abī 'Arība* in *IEJ*, vol. 8, p. 853].
86 For example, Ibn Hagar al-'Asqalanī (1325–1327 H, vol. 11, p. 129) and al-Haṭīb al-Baghdādī (1931, vol. 13, p. 475). On the subject, cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 70); on the individual, *ibid.*, pp. 96 ff. [See R. G. Khoury, art. *Ma'ī' b. al-Djarrāh* in *IEJ*, vol. 11, p. 101].
87 For example, Ibn Hagar al-'Asqalanī (1325–1327 H, vol. 4, p. 113, 115) and al-Haṭīb al-Baghdādī (1931, vol. 13, p. 475). On the subject, cf. Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, p. 61, n. 257) and on the individual, Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 518). [See H. P. Radatz, art. *Sufyān al-Thawrī* in *IEJ*, vol. 9, pp. 770 ff.].
88 Abū Nuwas (1958, pp. 311, 317). On the subject, cf. Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, p. 197 n. 2) [= (1971, vol. 2, p. 183, n. 5)] and Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 70; vol. 2, pp. 29 ff.); on the individual, cf. *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 460 ff.
89 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 92, l. 5) [= (1970, p. 198)]. On the subject, Blachère (1952–1966, p. 100, especially n. 3); on the individual, Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 366 ff.). [See J. W. Fück, art. *Ḥammād al-Rāwya* in *IEJ*, vol. 3, p. 136].
90 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 69, l. 6) [= (1970, p. 152)]. On the subject, cf. Blachère (1952–1966, p. 100, especially n. 3); on the individual, Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, pp. 127 ff.). [See Ch. Pellat, art. *Ibn al-Yabī* in *IEJ*, vol. 3, pp. 706 ff.].
91 See n. 84.
92 Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, p. 197) [= (1971, vol. 2, pp. 183 ff.)].
93 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 70) examines other pieces of evidence studied here.
94 al-Haṭīb al-Baghdādī (1931, vol. 13, p. 475, l. 10 ff.).
95 al-Haṭīb al-Baghdādī (1931, vol. 13, p. 475, l. 21 ff., 5 ff.).
96 Ibn Hibbān al-Buṣṭī (1959, p. 173, no. 1374).
97 On the institution of *muḏakkirah* (an informal exchange of *ḥadīṭ*s among students: see Glossary), cf. Ahmed (1968).
98 For example Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, p. 197, n. 3) [= (1971, vol. 2, p. 183, n. 6)].
99 See n. 89 and 90.

- 100 Cf. also on p. 33 under II. In the early period in particular, the word *kitāb* (pl. *kutub*), unless applied to the Qur'ān, usually only means "something written," "notes," "records," etc. and, in general, does not refer to actual books. Cf. Ullmann *et al.* (1970–, vol. 1, pp. 40 ff., art. *kitāb*); Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, p. 196) [= (1971, vol. 2, pp. 182 ff.)]; Pedersen (1984, p. 12). (The present article shares a number of ideas with the chapter "Composition and Transmission of Books" in the aforementioned work. I owe this reference to Professor R. Hillenbrand, Edinburgh.) Cf. also Sellheim, art. *kitāb* in *El*², vol. 5, pp. 207 ff. and Sellheim (1961, p. 66). Also Rosenthal (1968, pp. 69, 131 ff.): the earliest Arabic historiographical works were probably "private books, notebooks of scholars"; Horst (1953, p. 307): the sources for al-Tabarī's *Tafsīr* (*Qur'an Commentary*) were mostly "lecture notes, written down as an aide-mémoire."

It should be remembered that the first scholar to deal with the question of the oral versus written transmission of religious tradition in early Islam, A. Sprenger (1869, vol. 3, pp. 93 ff.) already saw matters in a clearer light than later scholars. He writes: "we have to distinguish between aides-mémoire, lecture notebooks and published books."

- 101 Cf. Pedersen (1984, pp. 20 ff.); Weisweiler (1952, p. 14 and 1951, pp. 34 ff.), *ad-Dahabī* (1955–1958, vol. 1, p. 409, l. 7; p. 196, l. 14); al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1931, vol. 7, p. 28, l. 3); Weisweiler (1951, p. 34); Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 67). Interestingly enough, according to these sources, only a few students in Šu'bah's course made notes; the rest then copied their records.
- 102 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1931, vol. 13, p. 475, l. 11) (cf. p. 31); Weisweiler (1952, p. 16/Arab.; 1951, p. 34) with these and other names of traditionists who held dictation courses.
- 103 Weisweiler (1952, p. 16/Arab.).
- 104 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 63, n. 7) with references.
- 105 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 95, l. 18 ff.) [= (1970, p. 205)].
- 106 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 95, l. 18 ff.) [= (1970, p. 205)].
- 107 Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (1949–1965, vol. 4, p. 318); cf. Rotter (1974, pp. 108, 119, 122); Werkmeister (1983, p. 157).
- 108 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 69, l. 7) [= (1970, p. 152)]. According to this source, Ibn al-A'rābi also transmitted by way of *qir'ān* (Ibn an-Nadīm, 1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 69, l. 5) [= (1970, p. 152)].
- 109 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 74, l. 28) [= (1970, p. 164)].
- 110 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1970, pp. 86 ff. and 1974, pp. 111 ff.).
- 111 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1974, p. 111). Cf. also Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, p. 61); on *Wakī*, cf. p. 31.
- 112 Ibn Hibbān al-Buṣṭī (1959, p. 146, no. 1153); cf. Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, p. 98, n. 24) with additional evidence and also Stauch (1969, p. 71).
- 113 Stauch (1969, pp. 11, 14 ff.).
- 114 Cf. Pedersen (1984, p. 33).
- 115 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1970, pp. 362 ff.); cf. Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, pp. 126 ff.); and Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 458 ff.) with further references.
- 116 Weisweiler (1952, p. 8 f/Arab.).
- 117 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1970, p. 443); cf. also n. 115.
- 118 Cf. Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, p. 124); Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, pp. 220 ff.) [= (1971, vol. 2, pp. 203 ff.)]; Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 458 ff.). Goldziher and Schacht assert that Mālik authenticated versions of the *Muwatta'* in a most careless fashion and that only his students edited the text. Sezgin on the other hand argues that Mālik himself produced the book in its entirety. As we have seen above, there is no contradiction between these two positions. In this context, Schacht remarks in *El*², vol. 6,

p. 264: "But the name *Muwatta'* ... is a guarantee that Mālik wanted to create a 'work' in the later sense. ..."

- 119 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1931, vol. 1, pp. 221 ff.). Cf. Fück (1925, p. 33); Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 1, pp. 88 ff.), both with further references; Al-Samuk (1978, pp. 149, 152, 164; also n. 130).
- 120 Cf. the references given in n. 119.
- 121 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1931, vol. 1, pp. 221, l. 6 ff.).
- 122 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, pp. 68 ff.) [= (1970, pp. 151 ff.)]; cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, pp. 53 ff.); and Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 1, p. 89), Cf. Chapter 3, pp. 70–71.
- 123 All the works discussed by Freimark (1967) are actual books.
- 124 The transmission of texts such as the Qur'ān, and certain grammatical works (e.g. Shawayh's *Kitāb*) (*The Book*), which had been passed on as "fixed texts" for some time, could have made an impression as well. They might have contributed to what C. H. M. Versteegh calls "a modified concept of what was regarded as text" (personal communication).
- 125 Cf. Gottschalk (1936, pp. 288 ff.); Sellheim (1954, pp. 45 ff., 56, 81 ff.; 1981, pp. 365 ff.).
- 126 This distinction is especially sorely missed in Ibn an-Nadīm's *Fihrist*. In expressions such as *wa-la-hū min al-kutub*, the term *kutub* can mean loose notes as well as edited books. In addition, the terms *ṣamā'iq* and *tasnīf* (to order systematically, to arrange in chapters, to compose) can relate both to an author of a work as well as to later scholars (his or the next generation of students) who redacted the work in question. Some examples: the *Fihrist* labels both al-Nadīm's collections of traditions (more about them below) and Ibn Qutaybah's books, which were edited by the author himself, as *kutub* (Ibn an-Nadīm, 1871–1872, vol. 1, pp. 100 ff., 77 ff.) [= (1970, pp. 220–227, 170 ff.)]. The same applies to Abū 'Ubayd's *Kitāb al-amāl* (*The Book of Proverbs*), an actual book, compared to the work of his predecessor Abū 'Ubaydah, which was not a book in this sense (Ibn an-Nadīm, 1871–1872, vol. 1, pp. 71, 53) [= (1970, pp. 156, 115)]; cf. also immediately below. Fortunately, there are a few exceptions to this rule in Ibn an-Nadīm. For example, he notes of Hammād ar-Rāwiyah: "People transmitted from him and the books were composed after his death" (*ṣamā'iat al-kutub ba'da-hū*) (Ibn an-Nadīm, 1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 92) [= (1970, p. 198)]. Equally interesting is his note about the writings of Naṣrān al-Hiraṣānī: "Ibn al-Sikīṭ kept Naṣrān's books (*kutub*) in his memory (*ḥifẓan*), while (Abū 'I-Ḥasan) al-Ḥusaynī (had them) as *ṣamā'*" (Ibn an-Nadīm, 1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 72) [= (1970, p. 158)]. Thus, Naṣrān must have had notes of his works, otherwise the text could not refer to his *kutub* (for another reference to his *kutub*, cf. Ibn an-Nadīm 1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 71, l. 13 [= (1970, p. 156)]). These "books," however, were not available as freely circulated manuscripts. Except for his own records, they existed only in his students' transmission.
- Ibn an-Nadīm's following comment on Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī is entirely unambiguous: "he has systematically arranged books, the composition of which he himself took care of..." (*wa-la-hū min al-kutub al-musammā'ah allatī tawallā bi-naḥṣi-hi tasnīfā-hā*) (Ibn an-Nadīm 1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 140) [= (1970, p. 309)]; cf. also Zolondek (1960, p. 222, n. 74).
- 127 al-Haṭīb al-Baġdādī (1931, vol. 12, pp. 404 ff.); cf. Gottschalk (1936, pp. 288 ff.).
- 128 Brockelmann (1943–1949, suppl. vol. 1, p. 213).
- 129 Brockelmann (1943–1949, vol. 1, p. 125).
- 130 al-Mas'ūdī (1965–1979, vol. 5, p. 104, §3146); cf. also al-Mas'ūdī's similar verdict on Ibn Ishāq's historical work (see p. 34) at al-Mas'ūdī (1965–1979, vol. 5, p. 211, §3446).

- 131 Werkmeister (1983, pp. 186 ff., 102 ff., 109 ff.).
 132 Sezgin (1967, vol. 1, pp. 82 ff.) gives a full account of his procedure. The passage in question has been translated by Bellamy (1984, p. 4):

All the isnaḍs of the book, the direct sources of which interest us, are placed on index cards, and these cards are arranged according to the name of the latest transmitter. Beginning with the first common name, we seek for further common names among the successive members. The last of these gives us the author of the source used in the book in question. For example, if the names of the transmitters are the same only in the first member, and thereafter different, this means that the first man is the author of the source employed, and that his material goes back to a variety of sources. If the names are common as far back as the second, third, and further members, this indicates that the first common names give us the transmitters, and the last common name before the branching off gives the author of the source. Once the sources of a book have been determined, one can search out the sources of the sources in the same manner with the same cards.

- 133 Presented first in Sezgin (1956, later also in 1967, vol. 1, pp. 82 ff.). One of Sezgin's predecessors is J. Wellhausen. On the first pages of his two historical monographs based on al-Ṭabarī (namely Wellhausen 1899, pp. 3 ff. and 1902, pp. III ff.), he distinguished between the "primary informants," "collectors" (Wellhausen, 1899, p. 4), or "main authorities" of al-Ṭabarī (Wellhausen, 1902, p. VII) and "mere transmitters." Although he did not explicitly set out his procedure, he—following either an exact method or his instinct—correctly identified Abū Miḥnaf, Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāqidī, al-Madā'inī (Wellhausen, 1902, pp. IV ff.), and Sayf ibn 'Umar (Wellhausen, 1899, pp. 3 ff.) as al-Ṭabarī's "main authorities." All of these are "authors" in Sezgin's sense. Pedersen (in Pedersen 1984, initially published in Danish in 1946), had already described Sezgin's method of *ʿisnād* analysis in some detail:

That he [sc. Yalyā' bn Ādam] was the actual author [sc. of the *Kiṭāb al-ḥarāğ* (*The Book of Land-Tax*)] is confirmed by the fact that he cites various authorities for his individual statements while the chain Ibn al-Buṣṭī, as-Sukkārī, as-Saffār, al-ʿĀmirī is unaltered. Thus, these four simply transmitted Ibn Ādam's book to one another.

(Pedersen, 1984, p. 33, n. 32)

Two other scholars studying the sources of the *Kiṭāb al-ağānī* (*The Book of Songs*) arrived at similar conclusions after, though independently of Sezgin and of one another. Zolondek (1960, p. 223) proposed the terms "major collectors" and "collector sources" for transmitters drawing from a large variety of sources (Sezgin would label them as "authors"). To designate those who relied (mostly) on a single authority, he coined the term "transmitters of collector sources." Fleischhammer (2004, pp. 18 ff., especially n. 14, p. 17) has come to the conclusion that, as he terms it, "sources in a narrow sense" should be kept distinct from "sources in a wide sense." The former group corresponds again to Sezgin's "authors," the latter comprises *each* link in a chain of transmitters.

In contrast to Sezgin, however, Zolondek and Fleischhammer have not gone so far as to identify the "major collectors" or compilers of "sources in a narrow sense" as *authors of written works*. Both scholars have consciously steered clear of the question of oral versus written transmission (cf. Zolondek, 1960, p. 222 and Fleischhammer, 2004, p. 16).

- 134 Cf. Mez (1922, pp. 171 ff.) [= (1937, pp. 178 ff.)] on the transitional phase between fluid and fixed works. In the field of philology—but not yet in theology—the

posits a "change of approach" in teaching practices for the fourth/tenth century: the replacement of dictations (*ʿamānī*)—the author only mentions (Knows?) this method of transmission—with the exposition of a work (*taḍrīs*). He subsequently attempts to relate the change in teaching practices characterized by the domination of *taḍrīs* to the emergence of *madrasas* in the fifth/eleventh century. Mez's conclusions should be reconsidered in the light of new findings on Islamic teaching practices and the rise of the *madrasa*. See also n. 142.

- 135 Cf. n. 64.
 136 Staath (1969, pp. 78 ff.); Leemhuis (1981, pp. 170 ff., especially 176, 178).
 137 Leemhuis (1981, pp. 170, 178).
 138 al-Azraqī (1858).
 139 Sezgin (1967, vol. 1, pp. 344 ff.).
 140 al-Azraqī (1858, pp. 5 ff.).
 141 Sezgin (1967, vol. 1, pp. 344 ff.).
 142 For some of the sciences relying on *ʿisnāds*, the fourth/tenth century seems to have marked the gradual transition from the customary forms of transmission toward the transmission of more or less stable texts. This practice, which had already been the rule for texts such as the Qurʾān and poetry as well as for works belonging to the non-*ʿisnād* sciences (such as Arabic grammar, for example, Sibawayh's *Kitāb*, cf. n. 124) and "foreign" sciences (cf. n. 181), entailed the reading of a text (normally by a student, in the case of poetry by the poet, or his *rawī*) and its explanation by the teacher, the poet, or his *rawī* with hardly any changes in the text's wording. Regarding the fourth/tenth century transition, cf. n. 134. Information on the *magāzīs aṣ-ṣaʿarā* (gatherings of poets), in which poets explained their *diwāns*, can be found in Ahmed (1968, pp. 83 ff.).

Since the commented texts themselves offered enough support for a *ṣayh*'s or poet's memory, the commentaries delivered in these gatherings had probably not necessarily been fixed in writing. Their explanations might, however, have been jotted down by students on the margin of their manuscript of the text in question and included in the text in a later copy. Thus, the process leads from oral explanations through marginal notes to interlinear commentary, which in the end became an integral part of the text of a manuscript. Cf. Sellheim (1954, pp. 81 ff., 95 ff.), who comments on the glosses to Abū 'Ubayd's *Kiṭāb al-umīd* (*Book of Proverbs*) and Wagner (1958, pp. 349 ff.), where the comments to as-Sūfī's recension (fourth/tenth century) of Abū Nuwās' *Diwān* (*Collected Poems*) are discussed.

- 143 Cf. Fück (1925, p. 7, n. 19).
 144 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, pp. 113, 114) [= (1970, p. 249)]; cf. Sezgin (1967, vol. 2, pp. 94 ff., no. 8, 29) and especially al-Ġumāhī (1916, p. XIII ff.).
 145 Further examples are works with identical or similar titles by al-Madā'inī (d. 228/843 or some years later; cf. Ibn an-Nadīm 1871–1872, vol. 1, pp. 100 ff.) [= (1970, pp. 220–227)] and his transmitter 'Umar Ibn Šabbāh (d. 262/875–6 or some years later; cf. Ibn an-Nadīm 1871–1872, vol. 1, pp. 112 ff. [= (1970, pp. 246 ff.)]), cf. Rötter (1974, p. 110); or Abū Miḥnaf (d. 157/774) and Hišām ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819), cf. U. Sezgin (1971, pp. 42 ff.), as well as Ma'mar ibn Rāšid (d. 154/770) and 'Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Hammām (d. 211/827), cf. Sezgin (1967, vol. 1, p. 99): "The *Taḥṣīṭ* (*Qur'ān Commentary*) and *Ġamīc* (*Compendium*) disseminated under his [sc. 'Abd ar-Razzāq's] name are not more than further transmissions [sc. of Ma'mar ibn Rāšid's works], to which he added but a few traditions."
 More examples can be found in Fück (1925, pp. 6 ff., n. 19); Gibb (1962, pp. 227 ff.); Zolondek (1960, p. 222, n. 74); and Goldfeld (1981, pp. 126 ff., n. 135).
 146 Cf. Fück (1925, p. 7, n. 19); Pedersen (1984, p. 23).
 147 Horst (1953, p. 307); Staath (1969, pp. 103 ff., 125 ff. and especially 133 ff.).

- 148 Fleischhammer (2004, pp. 14, 15 ff.).
 149 Bellamy (1984, p. 16).
 150 Werkmeister (1983, p. 186 ff.).
 151 Implicitly done by Horst (1953, pp. 292 ff.); more explicitly by Staught (1969, p. 104, 88, 99 ff.).
 152 In this context, Staught (1969, p. 104) found (based on Horst) that only this second basic type of source explains the immensely high number of unique *ṣiṣnāds* in at-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* (*Qur'an Commentary*): 11,364. All in all, at-Ṭabarī uses 13,026 different *ṣiṣnāds*, only 21 of which occur on more than 100 occasions!
 153 Cf. Werkmeister (1983, pp. 466 ff.) on collections of traditions traced back to *one* authority and *ibid.*, p. 348 on large numbers of single traditions as material underlying the lecture courses. Werkmeister does not distinguish between these two basic types as explicitly as Staught does for at-Ṭabarī. On the transmission of the account of the Barmakids, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 344 ff.; on Bedouin aphorisms, *ibid.*, pp. 305 ff.
 154 Cf. p. 36, especially n. 131.
 155 Fleischhammer (2004, p. 21, cf. p. 19, point 4).
 156 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 82).
 157 This is the subject of Fleischhammer (1979); cf. also Zolondek (1960, pp. 221 ff.) and Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 378 ff.).
 158 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 380, n. 3). The *ṣiṣnād* he refers to occurs in Abū 'l-Farağ al-Isfahānī (1285 H, vol. 10, p. 31):

ʿalḥarā-nī ʿAlī ʿbn Sulaymān (al-ʿAḥfās) wa-Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Yazīdī fī Kitāb an-naǧāʾid [the author is Abū 'Ubaydah] *qāla*:
qāla... *as-Sukkarī ʿan Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb ʿan ʿAlī ʿUbaydah*.

In *The Book of the Poetic Flyings* [by Abū 'Ubaydah], 'Alī ʿbn Sulaymān (al-Aḥfās) and Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Yazīdī reported to me: as-Sukkarī, on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, on the authority of Abū 'Ubaydah, said.

See also Fleischhammer (1979, p. 57, no. 62 and especially p. 61, n. 4; 2004, pp. 16 ff.). Another example is the following *ṣiṣnād* in Abū 'l-Farağ al-Isfahānī (1285 H, vol. 4, p. 17) (cf. Fleischhammer, 2004, p. 16 ff.):

ḥaddāta-nā... at-Ṭabarī fī 'l-Maǧāzī [the author is Ibn Ishāq] *qāla*:
ḥaddāta-nā Muḥammad ibn Ḥunayd qāla: ḥaddāta-nā Salamaḥ qāla:
ḥaddāta-nī Muḥammad ibn 'Ishāq qāla: ḥaddāta-nī... az-Zuhri.

In *The [Book of the] Campaigns* [by Ibn Ishāq], at-Ṭabarī told us: Muḥammad ibn Ḥunayd told us: Salamaḥ told us: Muḥammad ibn Ishāq told me: az-Zuhri told me.

Also worth mentioning is the following case: Abū 'l-Farağ relates that he used a book by X as a source while X invariably transmits from Y (*naṣṣuḥ min kitāb... ʿan...*, "I copied from the Book of... on the authority of..."), cf. Fleischhammer (1979, p. 55, no. 27; p. 56, no. 38) and Zolondek (1960, pp. 221 ff.). Here, too, Sezgin has the problem that, as Abū 'l-Farağ explicitly informs us, the "transmitter" and not the "author" is the real author of the immediate written source. Since Zolondek and Fleischhammer studiously avoid the question of written or oral transmission, this problem does not affect them (cf. n. 133).

- 159 Apart from Sezgin, both Zolondek and Fleischhammer have successfully done so (cf. n. 133).
 160 Cf. Bellamy (1984, p. 16).
 161 Bellamy (1984, p. 16).

- 162 Cf. again Bellamy (1984, p. 16).
 163 Cf. Staught (1969, p. 88).
 164 Staught (1969, p. 88).
 165 Cf. Rippin (1984, p. 43).
 166 Staught (1969, p. 88).
 167 Cf. U. Sezgin (1971, p. 35) as well as Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 77) and Abbott (1957–1972, vol. 2, p. 63).
 168 An extreme example can be found in Sellheim (1976, p. 34). The passage quoted there is taken from Ibn 'Aḥfās (1954, p. 276) and reads as follows: "*wa-amara* [sc. al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ]... *al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī) wa-Yahyā ʿbn Yaʿmar bi-dālika wa-allaḥa... kitāban fī 'l-qirāʾat... wa-naṣṣa 'n-naṣṣa dālika zamanan iawliān ilā ʿan ʿallāḥa ʿbn Muǧāhid kitāba-hu fī 'l-qirāʾat*."
 On the basis of this passage, Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 5) lists a *Kitāb al-qirāʾat* (*The Book of Qur'an Readings*) by Yahyā ʿbn Yaʿmar as the oldest book on the subject we know of. Sellheim claims that the phrase *wa-allaḥa* refers to al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ rather than the two Qur'ān experts al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Yahyā ʿbn Yaʿmar. According to him, *kitāb* should be read as the "proclamation" or "decree" of al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ "instructing people how to read the Qur'ānic passages in question."
 Grammatically, *ʿallāḥa* indeed refers to al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ. It nevertheless has to be read as "al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ ordered the composition" (cf. Brockelmann, 1974, §21b; a parallel case in Latin would be *Caesar pontem fecit = Caesar pontem fieri iussit*, "Caesar made the bridge = Caesar ordered the bridge to be built"), so that the two Qur'ān experts can be identified as the real authors of the *kitāb* and the term here denotes an actual book. This follows from the rest of the passage, which deals, similarly with the *Kitāb al-qirāʾat* "written" by al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ (i.e. al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Yahyā ʿbn Yaʿmar), with the well-known *Kitāb al-qirāʾat* (*The Book of Qur'an Readings*) by Ibn Muǧāhid. The passage should therefore be rendered as follows:

[al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ] ordered... al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Yahyā ʿbn Yaʿmar accordingly and thus caused... a book on Qur'ān readings to be composed... in accordance with which the people acted for a long time until Ibn Muǧāhid composed his *Book on the Qur'an Readings*.

169 Sellheim (1961, p. 67).

170 The works of Wansbrough (1977) and Rippin (1981, 1984) contain promising attempts to tackle the problem of authenticity. Even more important in this regard are van Ess (1975), Cook (1981), and Juybolli (1983).

171 As van Ess (1975, p. VII) remarks: "the early adoption of written transmission does not necessarily guarantee authenticity."

Goldfeld credits Islamic tradition with a high degree of precision in the transmission of works on account of its written basis. Even he has to admit that this did not prevent additions, deletions, revisions, and even tendentious modifications and fluctuations in wording and content. According to Goldfeld, however, these changes are "controlled" by the transmitters, that is, a text which assumes its final form through widespread recognition would never completely (!) lose its original characteristics (cf. Goldfeld, 1981, pp. 126 ff., 135).

172 Cf., for example, Rotter (1974, p. 122), who interpreted passages in which at-Ṭabarī quoted al-Madāʾim via *wiǧādh* as the "real" al-Madāʾim. Since these and similar passages were "copies of the original," they would display the "highest degree of authenticity" (Rotter, 1974, p. 109).

This is a modern concept which aims to restore a source work in its original form (or one of its original forms) from a compilation. It contrasts with the views of at-Ṭabarī and other contemporary Arabo-Islamic authors: they were not interested

in preserving books in the sense of "works of art," true to their original forms, but intended to provide authenticated traditions (cf. p. 37). They therefore preferred texts that they received through reliable transmitters by way of lectures—even though, or perhaps because, their "original" wording had been revised or supplemented with other material—to unauthorized manuscripts, which often lacked diacritics, and could have contained mistakes of copying and of comprehension and lacunae (cf. p. 40).

173 Ibn Qutaybah (1947, pp. 20 ff.).

174 Cf. Rosenthal (1947, pp. 24 ff.); Pedersen (1984, p. 32); Fleischhammer (2004, p. 16).

175 Cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, pp. 14–33) with references.

176 Al-Gūḡānī (1965, p. 15), Ibn Raṣīq (1972a, vol. 1, p. 16); cf. Schoeler (1975, p. 5, especially n. 3).

177 Cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, pp. 21 ff.).

178 Cf. Chapter 4, p. 102 and the literature listed in n. 660 (= Schoeler, 1981, p. 229 and n. 132).

179 Cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 27, n. 1). According to Sezgin, ar-Rāfiʿī (1940, vol. 1, pp. 295 ff.) discusses the relation between both *riwāyāt*s (the book was unavailable to me).

180 Bergsträsser (1925, p. 15/Germ., 18/Arab.).

181 The teaching method described by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq in the case of medical instruction in Alexandria and among contemporary Nestorian Christians, that is, *qirāʾah*, was still employed later for medical and philosophical teaching in Christian Arab and Muslim circles. The Christian physician and philosopher Ibn al-ʿIyāyib (d. 435/1043), working at the 'Aḍnāf hospital in Baḡdād, used to have a student read out a medical "classic"—Galen's epistle *ʾIḍ Ghalḡon*—while he himself commented on the text and dictated his comments to his students (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, 1965, p. 323).

In general, *qirāʾah* seems to have been the predominant form of transmission of knowledge in philosophy and medicine. Al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) is said to have "read" Aristotle's *Physics* forty times (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, 1965, p. 606; cf. Rosenthal 1947, p. 4). Yāhyā bn 'Adī (d. 363/973) read before Abū Biṣr Maṭṭā (d. 328/940) and al-Fārābī (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, 1965, p. 318); Ibn Buṭlān (d. 458/1068) read before Ibn al-ʿIyāyib (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, 1965, p. 325), and so on.

In all likelihood, we have to do here with a direct continuation of late antique medico-philosophical teaching practices. However, this does not preclude methods of learning and teaching in the Islamic sciences having an influence on the methods employed for the "foreign" sciences in later times (second/eighth–the fourth/tenth centuries).

In any case, the details of the Islamic system of transmission affected the image Arabic physicians and philosophers had of the transmission of Greek sciences in antiquity up to their time. Rescher has pointed out that al-Fārābī in his account of the history of logical studies (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, 1965, pp. 604 ff.) provided a form of *ʾisnād* (or *riwāyāt*) for his own teaching going back to Aristotle. He lists his teacher (Yūḥannā bn Ḥaylān) and mentions Yūḥannā's teacher as well; for the earlier periods, he mentions three successive schools. Oddly, al-Fārābī completely omits the conspicuous achievements of the translator Ḥunayn and his school. [230] Rescher (1963, pp. 25 ff.) explains that the philosopher saw logic not as a matter of books and documents, but as a living oral tradition of logical specialization and experience which, beginning with Aristotle, was continuously handed down from teacher to student.

Rescher, however, overlooked the fact that, at another place in al-Fārābī's account, we do find references to manuscripts (*musūd*) (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, 1965, p. 604). Thus, after the conquest of Alexandria, Augustus was said to have ordered that old manuscripts of Aristotelian texts from the time of Aristotle and Theophrastus were to be copied and used for teaching (*ʾamara... ʿan yukūna ʾi-l-ʿilm min-hā*). In other

words (and in our terminology), al-Fārābī's concept of the transmission of logical knowledge in antiquity was identical or at least very similar to the transmission of knowledge in contemporary Islamic sciences: the dissemination of knowledge in lecture courses—orally presented, but based on written records.

182 Schoeler (2002b).

183 On this issue, cf. Chapter 6, pp. 151–152 with n. 1049 as well as Schoeler (1996a, p. 6 with n. 8); also the index entries under "Literatur der Schule für die Schule" (writings of the school for the school); Schoeler (2002b, p. 71–89 = chapter 5).

184 Günther (1994, pp. 197 ff. and 1994, pp. 11–14).

185 Ibn Hibbān al-Buṣrī (1973–1983, vol. 7, p. 562).

186 Ibn Šabāḥ (1368 Š/1991, vol. 1, p. 133); cf. Schoeler (2002b, p. 114).

187 Landau-Tasseron (2004).

188 Motzki (2003).

189 Calder (1993).

190 Motzki (2003, p. 171).

191 Motzki (2003, p. 196).

192 Cf. the detailed remarks by Schoeler (2002b, p. 130).

2 THE TRANSMISSION OF THE SCIENCES IN EARLY ISLAM REVISITED

193 Chapter 1 (= Schoeler, 1985). Additional information in Schoeler (1986), my review of Werkmeister (1983), especially p. 127 f.

194 In several publications, Juyrboll has labeled such written records as "a sort of files" or "dossiers"; cf. Juyrboll (1973, 102 f.).

195 While the sources of Maḥlīk ibn Anas (d. 179/796), al-Buḡarī (d. 256/870), and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) never or only rarely included books in the strict sense (*synggrammata*; for a definition, cf. p. 46), Ibn 'Abd Rabhī (d. 328/940) and Abū l-Faraḡ al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967) did have a few at their disposal. Apart from their later date, the different literary genres of the works in question might have played a role as well.

Of the written sources Werkmeister identified for Ibn 'Abd Rabhī's *Kiṭāb al-ʿiqd* (*The Book of the Necklace*), the following are without doubt *synggrammata*: Abū l-Bayḍ's *Kiṭāb al-ʿamāl* (*The Book of Proverbs*) and Ibn Qutaybah's *Kiṭāb al-ʿaṣriḥ* (*The Book of Beverages*), zoological parts of Ibn Qutaybah's *ʿUyūn al-ʿuḡbār* (*The Book of the Wispings of Reports*), and the chapter on the *ḥawā-rīḡ* (the Hārīḡites; see Glossary) from al-Mubarrad's *al-Kamīl* (*The Complete Book*). The other supposedly written sources listed by Werkmeister are either unconfirmed in regard to their written character or belong to the category of *hypomnemata* (for a definition of the term, cf. immediately below) rather than *synggrammata*. Cf. Werkmeister (1983, pp. 57 ff. and especially pp. 186 ff.).

For the most part, the written sources listed by Fleischhammer for the *Kiṭāb al-ʿuḡānī* (*The Book of Songs*) are also *hypomnemata*; however, al-Ṭabarī's *Tarīḥ* (*History*), Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt aṣ-ṣiḡar* (*The Classes of the Poets*), and a few other sources are surely *synggrammata*. Both Werkmeister and Fleischhammer do not distinguish precisely between *synggrammata* and *hypomnemata*. Cf. Fleischhammer (1979, especially no. 4, 68).

196 Cf. Chapter 1, p. 41, especially n. 171 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 226, especially n. 110). In a series of very relevant articles, R. Talmon demonstrated and accounted for the occurrence of manipulations of historical facts and intentional modifications in later "reports" (*vahbar*) on early Arab grammarians, much of which was caused by the

- later conflict between the "schools" of Basrah and Kūfah. Cf. Talmon (1984, 1985, 1986).
- 197 Praechter (1909, p. 523) [= (1990, p. 38)]; von Arnim (1898, p. 172).
- 198 von Arnim (1898, pp. 170 ff., especially 181 ff. and 282 ff.).
- 199 von Arnim (1898, p. 182 f.).
- 200 von Arnim (1898, p. 175).
- 201 Praechter (1909, p. 524) [= (1990, p. 38)]; Wendland (1901, pp. 780 ff.).
- 202 Praechter (1909, pp. 523 ff.) [= (1990, pp. 38 ff.)].
- 203 Richard (1950, pp. 193 ff.).
- 204 Westerink (1971) with additional references on p. 7, n. 4.
- 205 Praechter (1909, p. 524) [= (1990, p. 38)]; Richard (1950, p. 192 f., 201) with additional examples on pp. 198 ff.
- 206 Cf. Sezgin (1967, vol. 1, p. 29); Chapter 1, p. 28 with additional references in n. 64 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 202 with n. 6).
- Further examples can be found in Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 33 f.) [= (1970, p. 75 f.)]; *Taj̄sir Nah̄ṣalʿan ad-Dah̄ḥāk ibn Muzāḥim, The Qurʾān Commentary of Nah̄ṣalʿan on the Authority of ad-Dah̄ḥāk ibn Muzāḥim* (cf. Sezgin, 1967, vol. 1, pp. 29 ff.); *Taj̄sir ʿIkrīmāh ʿan Ibn ʿAbbās, The Qurʾān Commentary of Ikrīmāh on the Authority of Ibn ʿAbbās* (cf. Sezgin, 1967, vol. 1, p. 26); *Kiṭāb Saʿīd ibn Baṣṭʾan Qatāḍah, The Book of Saʿīd ibn Baṣṭʾan on the Authority of Qatāḍah* (cf. Sezgin, 1967, vol. 1, p. 31 f.); *Taj̄sir Muḥammad ibn Tawr ʿan Maṣmar* (cf. Sezgin, 1967, vol. 1, p. 290 f.) *ʿan Qatāḍah, The Qurʾān Commentary of Muḥammad ibn Tawr on the Authority of Maṣmar... on the Authority of Qatāḍah*.
- 207 Cf. Sezgin (1967, vol. 1, pp. 99, 290); see also Schoeler (1986, p. 126). More examples in Chapter 1, pp. 36–37, especially p. 37, n. 145 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 216 ff., especially p. 219, n. 83).
- 208 Praechter (1909, p. 524) [= (1990, p. 38)].
- 209 Praechter (1909, p. 525) [= (1990, p. 40)].
- 210 Cf. Ullmann *et al.* (1970, vol. 1, pp. 36, 1, 32 ff.); Abbot (1957–1972, vol. 2, p. 61 f.).
- 211 Praechter (1909, p. 528 f.) [= (1990, p. 44)].
- 212 Praechter (1909, p. 525) [= (1990, p. 39)].
- 213 Westerink (1971, p. 8) describes a typical session under Olympiodorus (d. after 565) and his students as follows:

the text under discussion... was divided into *perikopai* (sections) of ca. two to four pages; in a lecture, each section was prefaced with an extensive introduction (*theōria*), then read and commented on (this step was sometimes called *lexis*; this term could, however, also refer in general to the section under discussion).... Almost without exception, the *theōria* is the main part of the lecture. The discussion of the text... could... [sometimes] be dropped.

Teaching methods at late antique rhetorical and law schools—especially the law school of Beirut (c. 200–551 CE)—in the fifth and the first half of the sixth centuries must have borne strong resemblances to the almost contemporary philosophical teaching methods in Alexandria. At both institutions, works of a "classic" were commented on; *theōria* in Alexandria corresponded to *protheoria* in Beirut and *lexis* in the former was comparable to *paragraphe* in the latter. Cf. Collinet (1925, pp. 245 ff.) on legal instruction in Beirut.

The form of the teachers' commentaries in Beirut at that time was similar to the practice long followed by all of the Greek teachers in

the schools of rhetoric.... The legal method practised in the Orient contained... traditional procedures of the Greek schools: commentary based on passages or words deemed essential in a text. The lecture course consisted... in commenting on (or in glossing) in succinct phrases the passages or most prominent words of the classical work under discussion.... These brief remarks formed the *paragraphe*.... The professors briefly announced the contents of the title or chapter to be commented on. Such announcements were called *protheoria*.

Interestingly, teaching methods employed before the period under discussion were completely different: in the fourth century, the professors did not comment on texts at Beirut. Rather, they gave "casuistic" lessons and "dogmatic" instruction (Collinet, 1925, p. 220).

214 Zimmermann (1981, p. CIII) remarks: "Our evidence suggests that, after Stephanus, commentaries took the form of marginal notes." Cf. also Hein (1985, p. 24).

We could speculate that teaching in rhetorical and law schools in the seventh century (the Beirut school of law had been closed at that point) took a downward turn similar to that in Alexandria: commentaries become marginal glosses.

215 Cf. Stauch (1969, p. 140 f.). The individual exegetical *ḥadīṭ* in Muḡāḥid's commentary mostly took the following form: *isnād* (chain of authorities)—*fi qawli-hi/ḥi qawl Allāh*, "in his words/in the words of Allāh" (followed by the relevant Qurʾānic quote)—*yāqulū/yasni*, "he says/that is" (followed by the commentary).

216 A direct dependency is claimed by Meyershof (1930, p. 399), who writes:

The school system in this [sc. Alexandrian] form survived in both Orient and Occident throughout the Middle Ages, indeed in the Islamic Orient until today. We only have to enter one of the great mosques functioning as theological schools to see Alexandrian teaching practices face-to-face: a student reads out part of a classical work to the teacher, who adds his questions and comments.

However, see our comments on the differences between the two teaching systems above.

217 Cf. Baumstark (1922, pp. 101 ff. on the Nestorians and especially pp. 166 ff. on the Jacobites; several Jacobite scholars, Sergius of Rešʿaynā among them, were educated in Alexandria); O'Leary (1979, pp. 52, 61, and 66 ff. on Nestorians, and pp. 83 f. and especially 91 ff., 95 on Jacobites). Cf. also Gutas (1983, especially p. 255); Vööbus (1965, pp. 179 ff.). See also n. 223.

218 We at least know that in the school of Nisibis, two important aspects of the later Islamic system were already of common occurrence: lecture notes becoming literary works at a later stage (e.g. the treatises of Thomas of Edessa, cf. Baumstark, 1922, p. 121) as well as the reading out of a text by a student before a teacher (the school statutes of 496 mention "reading before a physician," cf. Baumstark, 1922, p. 114; for the Syriac and Arabic texts in question, cf. Raska 1897, p. 10). In spite of its continued existence after the Islamic conquest, Nisibis probably did not exert any direct influence on teaching practices in Bagdād—it was mediated by Gondēšāpur. Cf. O'Leary (1979, p. 67).

219 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1398/1978, vol. 1, p. 240, no. 63; p. 248 f., no. 66; p. 290 f., no. 94 f.). Cf. Elʿ, vol. 3, p. 409 ff., at *masʿūdī* (I. Pedersen).

220 See Chapter 1, p. 42 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 228).

221 See also Chapter 1, p. 42 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 228). The Jewish influence on the Islamic *ḥadīṭ* system needs to be researched in greater detail.

- 222 Bergsträsser (1925, p. 15/Germ., 18/Arab.). Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah (1965, p. 151) reports: "These Alexandrians used to . . . meet each day to read (*qir'ah*) and interpret a portion (*ḥayr*) of it" [sc. the 16 summaries, annotated abridgements of certain Galenic works]. In his *Kitāb miḥāḥ al-ṭibb* (*The Book of the Key to Medicine*), Ibn Hindū writes: "The Alexandrians followed the custom of reading them [sc. the 16 summaries] out in their lecture circle (*maḡlis taṣlimi-him*), which is called *usḥūl* (scholē)" (Dietrich, 1966, p. 200, no. 92).
- 223 Cf. El², vol. 2, p. 1119 f., art. *Gondēshāpur* (A. Sayili). O'Leary (1979, p. 68 f.) points out that

in the city of Jundi-Shapur . . . the Alexandrian curriculum was introduced and the same books of Galen read and lectured upon as at Alexandria . . . Obviously the courses followed at Alexandria were in great repute and were generally regarded as the model for a secular education.

Ullmann (1970, p. 22) remarks: "the school model of Gondēshāpur with its connection between theoretical and clinical instruction became the model for the foundation of Islamic hospitals."

- 224 Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah (1965, p. 257) reports on the authority of Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm ad-Dāyah (d. c. 265/878): "Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, the translator, read before Yūḥannā 'bn Māsawayh the book [of Galen] on *The Schools of Medicine*."

- 225 Cf. on this issue Meyerhof (1930) and the doubts expressed by Zimmermann (1981, pp. 103 ff.) and Gutas (1983, p. 255).

Peters (1968, pp. 71–78, especially pp. 72, 74) has claimed that *philosophical* instruction in Bagdad before the year 900 (arrival in town of the remnants of the Harranian teaching tradition, themselves successors to the Alexandrian tradition) was, unlike medical instruction, mainly private in nature. Consequently, the tradition of personal instruction in *philosophy* would only have started with the chain Yūḥannā 'bn Haylān—al-Fārābī and Quwayrī/Abū Yālyā 'l-Marwazī—Abū Bisr Mattā. It is true that we know nothing in this respect about Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, who was only reported to have attended the *medical maḡlis* of Yūḥannā 'bn Māsawayh (correctly noted by Peters, 1968, p. 74; cf. our n. 224). On the other hand, Ibn ad-Dāyah explicitly mentions that he himself had read *logic* before Yūḥannā 'bn Māsawayh: *wa-qāharu la-hu 'l-talmadhā fī gīrāṭi kūtub al-manāliq salay-hi*, "and I studied with him, reading books of logic before him" (Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, 1965, p. 247).

- Finally, we do not hear anything about the teachers al-Kindī read before (as Peters, 1968, p. 74 points out); he might have been an autodidact. But al-Kindī himself taught philosophy: as-Sarāḥī "read before him and took from him" (Ibn an-Nadīm, 1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 261) [= (1970, p. 626)].

- 226 As Versteegh (1989, p. 291 f.) recently demonstrated, we have to draw a sharp distinction between the fields of *grammar* (in the strict sense, "linguistics") and *philology* (including lexicography). This distinction, already made by early Arabic scholars and manifest in the existence and use of the terms *nahw* and *lugah*, often enough extends to the *exponents* of the respective fields. In the bibliographical literature, we frequently find descriptions such as:

the most excellent of them [sc. of the four previously mentioned scholars] in grammar (*nahw*) was Sībawayhi [d. c. 180/796]; an-Nadr ibn Sumayl [d. 203/819] concentrated mostly on lexicography (*lugah*); Mu'arrīg al-'Iḡlī [d. after 204/819] on poetry and lexicography (as-Sirāfī, 1936, p. 49).

According to Muḥammad ibn Sallām al-Ḡumālī (d. 231/845 or 232/846),

Ibn Abī Ishāq [d. 117/735 or 127/745] was better with *qiyās* [the rules: grammatical analogical deductions], whereas Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' [d. ca. 154/770–1 or 157/774] knew more about the *kālam* (the speech or language) of the (pure) Arabs and their rare words. (Zettersteen 1920, p. 8; cf. also Versteegh, 1989, p. 291 and pp. 53).

On the other hand, many scholars were active in both fields, for example, al-Ḥaṭīb ibn Ahmad (d. between 160/776 and 175/791) (see Chapter 6), al-Kisā'ī (d. 189/805), al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898 or 286/899), Ja'lab (d. 291/904). The works, however, can almost always be assigned to one of the two categories. Those on grammar in the strict sense (syntax, morphology, phonetics, linguistic principles, grammatical methodology, etc.) are obviously in the minority. As far as I can see, there is some overlap in the *maḡlis* and *amālī* literature. Topics treated in a *maḡlis* could of course come from both the fields of philology and lexicography on the one hand and grammar on the other.

Below, we will see that the distinction between grammar and philology outlined above also corresponded to different *teaching practices*.

- 227 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 41) [= (1970, p. 92)]: as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 31 f.): az-Zubayrī (1973, p. 23): al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 58): Abū 'l-ʿayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 23); cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 9, pp. 37 ff.) with additional references.

According to Abū 'l-ʿayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 23), who reports on the authority of Abū Bakr as-Sūlī (d. 335/940), al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898 or 286/899) claimed to have read sheets from one of the two books by 'Isā 'bn 'Umar (d. 149/766); as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 31 f.), though, states that neither he nor anybody else has ever seen the books in question.

- 228 Sībawayhi (1966–1977).

- 229 Reuschel (1959, p. 8); cf. also Sezgin (1967–, vol. 9, p. 53).

- 230 Cf. p. 52.

- 231 On this issue, cf. Reuschel (1959, p. 9–14); cf. also Troupeau (1961). On second-hand quotations in the *Kitāb*, cf. Versteegh (1983).

- 232 As Sezgin (1967–, vol. 9, p. 36) also concedes.

- 233 Reuschel (1959, p. 11).

- 234 Abū 'l-ʿayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 65); al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 58).

- 235 Cf. the long list of works in Sezgin (1967–, vol. 9, p. 58–63); cf. also Versteegh (1987, p. 154 f.): "One could almost say that the entire tradition was based on one text, the *Kitāb*, which was subjected to a constant process of comment and explanation."

- 236 al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 95); as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 50).

- 237 al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 95); as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 50); Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 52) [= (1970, p. 114)]; as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 50); p. 52) [= (1970, p. 114)]; Zettersteen (1920, p. 18); cf. also Sezgin (1967–, vol. 9, p. 53 f.).

- 238 Most of the notes are given in Sībawayhi (1966–1977).

- 239 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 52) [= (1970, p. 114)]; as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 50).

- 240 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 52) [= (1970, p. 114)]; as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 50); al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 95).

- 241 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 59) [= (1970, p. 128)]; az-Zubayrī (1973, p. 101). Cf. also the *riwāyah* (introductory *isnād*) at the beginning of Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* in Ḥārūn's edition (Sībawayhi, 1966–1977, p. 3 f., 10 f.).

- 242 al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 95); Abū 'l-ʿayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 84); as-Sirāfī (1936, p. 51).

- 243 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 87).
 244 az-Zubaydī (1973, p. 142).
 245 The reports above, especially the first two, display a very strong pro-Basrah bias. They probably date from a time when the schools of Basrah and Kūfah became competitors; they are scarcely historical and did probably not emerge before ad 900. They are intended to explain the strange fact (from the perspective of the two schools' competition with each other) that the Basrian Sibawayhi's book was regarded as fundamental and used even in Kūfah. On that issue, cf. the articles by Talmon (especially 1986, p. 158 f.).
 246 Sibawayhi (1966–1977, p. 3 f., 10 f.).
 247 Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, p. 192) [= (1971, vol. 2, p. 178 f.)]; see also Chapter 1, p. 179, n. 142 (= Schoeler 1985, p. 218, n. 80).
 248 For example, the *Tafsīr Muḡāhid* (*The Qur'ān Commentary of Muḡāhid*), cf. Staath (1969, pp. 3–16).
 249 This of course does not completely exclude other transmission methods, cf. pp. 57–58.
 250 al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 174).
 251 Ahmed (1968, pp. 54, 154); Versteegh (1987, p. 92 and 1989, p. 295).
 252 Reuschel (1959, p. 10).
 253 Reuschel (1959, p. 9, 63 f.).
 254 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 9, p. 46).
 255 In as-Suyūfī (n.d., vol. 1, p. 80 f.).
 256 Cf. p. 49.
 257 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 51) [= (1970, p. 111)]; as-Sīrāfī (1936, p. 48).
 258 Zetterstēen (1920, p. 18).
 259 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 65); al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 58).
 260 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 42) [= (1970, p. 93)]; as-Sīrāfī (1936, p. 38).
 261 Cf. n. 237.
 262 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 51) [= (1970, p. 111)]; al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 95); Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 66); as-Sīrāfī (1936, p. 48).
 263 Zetterstēen (1920, p. 18).
 264 al-Marzubānī (1964, p. 58); Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 65).
 265 This idea is based on a letter from Professor Manfred Ullmann (December 6, 1985).
 266 Cf. Sibawayhi (1966–1977, vol. 1, p. 23).
 267 as-Sīrāfī (1936, p. 50).
 268 This does not conflict with az-Zubaydī's verdict quoted immediately above: that al-Ḥaṭīb never wrote a single word on grammar or composed a draft refers to a (hypothetical) book (*syngramma*).
 We should also keep in mind the following dictum ascribed to al-Ḥaṭīb: "I wrote down all I heard" and I kept in my memory all I wrote down" (*maṣamī'nu šay'an-illa katabu-hu wa-lā katabu šay'an-illa ḥafiztu-hu*) (al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī 1974, p. 114 f.; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr n.d., vol. 1, p. 77).
 269 To use the expression coined by Goldziher (1890, vol. 2, p. 197) [= (1971, vol. 2, p. 183)].
 270 as-Suyūfī (n.d., vol. 1, p. 81).
 271 Werkmeister (1983, p. 103 f.).
 272 Versteegh (1987, p. 93; 1989, p. 291).
 273 Zetterstēen (1920, p. 8); cf. Versteegh (1989, p. 291 f.).
 274 Zetterstēen (1920, p. 12); cf. Versteegh (1989, p. 291).
 275 Versteegh (1989, p. 291 f.).
 276 Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī (1387/1967).
 277 A number of quotations from the *Kiṭāb an-nawādir* confirm that the so-called "oral" and "written" transmission in philological teaching institutions ran parallel to and

- supplemented each other in a manner similar to that observed in the case of *ḥadīṭ* scholars, historians, and so on (cf. Chapter 1, pp. 40–41 = Schoeler 1985, pp. 224 ff.); the book's redactor al-Aḥfās al-Aṣḡar (d. 315/927), who contributed large quantities of material to the work—his own opinions as well as views of other scholars he transmits—frequently remarks on readings of obscure names or words as follows: *hākāḡa waḡḡa fī kiṭābi; Salma; wa-hiḡḡi; Sulmayyūn*, "in my book, I have Salma, and in my memory: Sulmayyūn" (Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī, 1387/1967, p. 121); *kaḡā* [sc. Nuḡayk] *waḡḡa fī kiṭābi; wa-hiḡḡi; Naḡiḡ*, "this [sc. Nuḡayk] is in my book; in my memory: Naḡiḡ" (Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī, 1387/1967, p. 112); *al-masnuḡ: ṣyḡḡallun*, *wa-ḡḡa fī š-šifḡ: ṣyḡḡallun*, "what I heard is *ṣyḡḡallun*, but in the poem, *ṣyḡḡallun* occurs" (Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī, 1387/1967, p. 53); *hākāḡa waḡḡa fī kiṭābi... wa-taḡḡḡi; wa-anā yunḡḡru-hu wa-hiḡḡi... wa-taḡḡḡi*, "this is in my book... *wa-taḡḡḡi*, but I reject it, because I have in my memory... *wa-taḡḡḡi*" (Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī, 1387/1967, p. 26); cf. also *ibid.*, p. 168.
 278 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 38).
 279 Ta'lab (1956).
 280 az-Zaḡḡaḡī (1962).
 281 az-Zaḡḡaḡī (1382/1963).
 282 al-Qānī (n.d.).
 283 as-Suyūfī (n.d., vol. 1, p. 144).
 284 as-Saybānī (1974–1975); Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 121 f.); Diem (1968).
 285 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 91 f.).
 286 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 93).
 287 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 94).
 288 The Tāhīrids are meant, namely 'Abd Allāh ibn Tāhir (d. 230/844); cf. Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 71) [= (1970, p. 156)]; al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī (1931, vol. 12, p. 404, l. 16 f.); cf. also Gottschalk (1936, pp. 274 ff.).
 289 Gottschalk (1936, p. 289); the quotation is taken from his article on *Abū 'Ubayd* in *IE²*, vol. 1, p. 157; cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 81).
 290 According to other sources, the *Kiṭāb al-ḡarīb al-muṣannaf* depends on an-Nadīr ibn Šimayl's (d. 203/819) (lost) *Kiṭāb as-sīfat* (*The Book of Attributes*); cf. Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 52) [= (1970, p. 113)]; also Ibn Durstawayhi in al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī (1931, vol. 12, p. 404); cf. Gottschalk (1936, p. 284 f.); Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 82).
 291 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luḡawī (1955, p. 93).
 292 Abdel-Tawab (1962, especially pp. 130–135).
 293 Abdel-Tawab (1962, p. 84 ff.).
 294 Abdel-Tawab (1962, p. 130).
 295 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 83).
 296 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 82 and vol. 4, p. 334).
 297 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 75, no. 6).
 298 In Hafner (1905, pp. 66–136 and 137–157).
 299 Abdel-Tawab (1962, p. 88).
 300 Zetterstēen (1920, p. 14).
 301 Abū 'Ubayd, 1384–1387/1964–1967, pt 1, p. 1, n. 1:
ḥadāṭa-nā 'ahmad ibn Ḥammād, qāla: qāla la-nā 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ṣāziz, qāla: samīḡḡu ḥadāṭ 'l-kiṭāb qir'atun 'alā 'abī 'Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallām ḡayr marraḡ wa-sa'altu-hu: yurwā 'an-hu mā qur'a 'alay-ka? ja-qāla: na'am.
 Ahmad ibn Hammād reported to us: 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ṣāziz said to us: I 'audied' this book through reading it before Abū 'Ubayd al-Qasim ibn

Sallām more than once and I asked him, "Can what has been read before you be transmitted [sc. by me]?" and he answered, "Yes."

This is a Rampur manuscript. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. xv.

302 Quoted after Sellheim, 1954, p. 83 f.:

(waḡadhu fī) 'l-asl alladī ʿarādu bi-hi ḥadā 'l-kiṭāb mā sūʿan-hi. (karabo) ḥadīthi 'n-muṣṣaḥ bi-ḥadīthi ʿAlī 'bn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz kātib ʿAbī 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (wa-jhiya maqrʿah musāḥḥah ʿala ʿasl ʿAbī 'Ubayd alladī bi-ḥadīthi—tūmma suḥḥiḥat bi-qirʿat ʿAbī Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAnbārī.

(I found in) the original which I collated with this book [a statement which took] the following form: 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ʿAzīz the scribe of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām wrote this copy in his own hand: it has been read and corrected on the basis of the original which is in the hand of Abū 'Ubayd; then it was corrected in accordance with the reading of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Anbārī.

The manuscript in question is Ms. Feyzullah 1587.

303 Quoted after Abū 'Ubayd, 1384–1387/1964–1967, vol. 1, p. 1 f.:

ʿabbara-nī... ʿAbū 'l-Tayyib Ṭāhir ibn Yahyā 'bn ʿAbī 'l-Ḥayr al-Imrā-nī qirʿatan ʿalay-hi qāla: ʿabbara-nī ʿabī Yahyā 'bn ʿAbī 'l-Ḥayr... qirʿatan ʿalay-hi ḡayr marwī, qāla: ʿabbara-nī... Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Farīsī qirʿatan ʿalay-hi qāla: ʿabbara-nā 'ismāʿīl ibn Maḥlūl, qāla: ʿabbara-nā Muḥammad ibn 'Ishāq, qāla: ʿabbara-nā... ʿAbū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Mansūr as-Ṣahrazūrī, qāla: ʿabbara-nā ʿabd Allāh ibn ʿAlmad al-Farādī (?) qāla: ʿabbara-nā Daʿlāḡ ibn ʿAlmad qāla: ʿabbara-nā... ʿAbū 'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī 'bn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz... qāla: qāla ʿAbū 'Ubayd.

Abū 'l-Tayyib Ṭāhir ibn Yahyā 'bn Abī 'l-Ḥayr al-Imrānī informed me, during reading before him: My father Yahyā 'bn Abī 'l-Ḥayr al-Imrānī informed me, during reading before him more than once: Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Farīsī informed me, during reading before him: Ismāʿīl ibn Maḥlūl informed us: Muḥammad ibn 'Ishāq informed us: Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Mansūr as-Ṣahrazūrī informed us: 'Abd Allāh ibn Almad al-Farādī informed us: Daʿlāḡ ibn Almad informed us: Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ʿAzīz informed us: Abū 'Ubayd said.

A manuscript from Madras.

304 Quoted after Adbel-Tawab, 1962, p. 36:

ḥaddatu-nā ʿAbū ʿAlī 'l-Ismaʿīl ibn al-Qāsim al-Baḡdādī, qāla: qurʿatū ḥadā 'l-kiṭāb ʿala ʿAbī Bakr Muḥammad... Ibn al-Anbārī sanat 317, [ḥaddatu-] nā ʿAbū Bakr qirʿatan ʿalay-hi qāla: ḥaddatu-nī ʿabī, qāla: qurʿanā ʿala ʿAbī 'l-Ḥasan at-Ṭūsī ʿAlī 'bn ʿAbd Allāh bi-Surra-man-rʿa, qāla: qāla ʿAbū 'Ubayd.

Abū 'Alī Ismāʿīl ibn Qāsim al-Baḡdādī reported to us: I read this book before Abū Bakr Muḥammad... al-Anbārī in the year 317: Abū Bakr reported to us during reading before him: my father reported to us: we read [this] before Abū 'l-Ḥasan at-Ṭūsī 'Alī 'bn 'Abd Allāh in Samarrā and he said: Abū 'Ubayd said.

The manuscript is Ms Escorial. 1650.

Quoted after Adbel-Tawab, 1962, p. 36:

Kiṭāb al-ḡarīb al-muṣannaf, taʿlīf ʿAbī 'Ubayd... riwāyat... ʿAbī 'l-Ḥusayn Hilāl ibn al-Muḥassin ibn Hilāl al-Katīb, ʿan ʿAbī Bakr ʿAlmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḡarrāḥ an-naḥwī, ʿan ʿAbī Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Baṣṣār an-naḥwī ʿan ʿabī-hi ʿan al-Ḥasan at-Ṭūsī ʿan ʿAbī 'Ubayd...

The Book of Uncommon [Vocabulary], Arranged Systematically, composed by Abū 'Ubayd... transmitted by... Abū 'l-Ḥusayn Hilāl ibn al-Muḥassin ibn Hilāl the Scribe, on the authority of Abū Bakr Almad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḡarrāḥ the Grammarian, on the authority of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Baṣṣār the Grammarian on the authority of his father on the authority of al-Ḥasan at-Ṭūsī on the authority of Abū 'Ubayd.

This is from Ms Faith 4008.

305 Quoted after the facsimile edition Abū 'Ubayd 1985, p. 2:

ʿabbara-nā ʿAlī 'bn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Baḡdādī bi-Makkah sanat 284, qāla: ḥaddatu-nā ʿAbū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, qāla: 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ʿAzīz al-Baḡdādī informed us in Mecca in the year 284 (ad 897): Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām reported to us.

This text is now edited by J. Burton [= Abū 'Ubayd (1987)]: the edition is based on the manuscript Topkapı Sarayı, Ahmet III, 143.

As a rule, the term ʿabbara-nā (he informed us) indicates qirʿah (reading), ḥaddatu-nā (he reported to us) points to samāʿ (audition).

306 I am unsure whether the *Kiṭāb an-naṣīḥ wa-l-manāṣiḥ* (cf. n. 305), is a *syngamma* of Abū 'Ubayd. The *isnāds* for separate traditions are uniform throughout the work: ʿabbara-nī ʿAlī 'bn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, qāla: ḥaddatu-nā ʿAbū 'Ubayd, qāla: ḥaddatu-nā. ("The Book of the Abrogating and the Abrogated)... 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ʿAzīz informed us: Abū 'Ubayd reported to us: he reported to us." They rather suggest that Abū 'Ubayd's student 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ʿAzīz or one of 'Alī 'bn 'Abd al-ʿAzīz's students edited the work.

307 al-Ḥarīb al-Baḡdādī (1931, vol. 12, p. 407 f.). Cf. Gottschalk (1936, p. 279 f.), due to a mistranslation, Gottschalk in my opinion missed the point of the two anecdotes.

308 Cf. n. 303 ff; see also al-Azhari's remarks regarding the transmission of the works by Abū 'Ubayd he used (Zetterstéen, 1920, 19 f.).

309 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 83 f.).

310 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 86 f.).

311 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 8, p. 84 f.). Sellheim (1954, pp. 95 ff.) explained how al-Bakr's commentary on the *Kiṭāb al-camiḥ* developed out of marginal glosses, supplements, etc. (derived from the lecture tradition) in manuscripts al-Bakr used.

312 Cf. p. 48.

313 Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah (1965, p. 323); cf. Chapter 1, p. 261, n. 181 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 229, n. 121).

314 Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah (1965, p. 323).

315 Best known is the following chain: Aws ibn Ḥaḡar—Zuhayr—Ka'ḥ ibn Zuhayr—al-Huṭay'ah—Hudbah ibn Ḥasrām—Ḡannī—Kutayyir; cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 22) with references.

316 Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah (1965, p. 324): *Ibn al-Tayyib ʿabdu ʿan Ibn al-Ḥannār*, "Ibn al-Tayyib 'took' [knowledge] from Ibn al-Ḥannār."

317 Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah (1965, p. 428).

- 318 Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah (1965, p. 318).
 319 Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah (1965, p. 317); Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 263) [= (1970, p. 630)].
 320 Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah (1965, p. 325).
 321 al-Qifī (1903, p. 314 f.). The *qir'ah*-note runs as follows: *qar'ra 'alayya hadā 'l-kitaḥ min 'awwal-hi 'ilā 'āḥiri-hi 'š-ṣayḥ... 'āḥi 'l-Ḥasan al-Muḥār ibn al-Ḥasan... wa-fahima-hu gāyati al-fahm, wa-katiba 'abdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib*, "The Ṣayḥ... Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Muḥār ibn al-Ḥasan read this book from start to finish before me... and he understood it completely. 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib wrote [sc. this note]."
 322 Schacht and Meyerhof (1937, pp. 50–53, Arab.; 83–86, Engl.); cf. also Schacht (1936, p. 538 f.) and Schacht and Meyerhof (1937b).
 323 The translation provided by Schacht and Meyerhof is not quite correct; this is a more precise rendering.
 324 Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah (1965, p. 563); cf. Schacht and Meyerhof (1937a, p. 12 ff.); Schacht (1936, pp. 530–535).
 325 Chapter 1, p. 42 (= Schoeler 1985, p. 227 f.).
 326 Zettersteen (1920, p. 32).
 327 Spies (1968, p. 33a–b).
 328 Cf. p. 48.
 329 Cf. p. 58.
 330 Vajda (1956, p. V). He lists five *ṣanāʿ* notes in medical manuscripts, cf. Vajda (1956, pp. 37 ff., nos XXXVI–XL). In comparison, he finds 24 such notes in traditionist literature, four each in legal, grammatical and exegetical works and one in a philosophical work. Cf. Dietrich (1966, p. 33, no. 11; p. 84, no. 30; pp. 183 ff., no. 87). See also the following footnote.
 331 Dietrich (1966, p. 221, no. 112; pp. 224 ff., no. 113; p. 229, no. 115; p. 232, no. 117). Interestingly, no. 113 deals with an author (one Zakarīyā al-Marāḡī), who read his *own* work, a short booklet on the fundamentals of medicine, before his teacher 'Abd al-Lāfi al-Baḡdādī and had its reading authenticated by him. The permission to transmit (if the term is still applicable at that stage) a medical work could be given at this time not only by the author or an authorized transmitter, but by any other authority in the field.
 332 On this point, cf. Schoeler (1996a, pp. 27 ff. and 2002, pp. 43 ff.).
 333 Strohmaier (1987, p. 387).
 334 Cf. p. 49. See Schoeler (2002b, p. 96 f.).

3 WRITING AND PUBLISHING: ON THE USE AND FUNCTION OF WRITING IN EARLY ISLAM

I am very grateful to my colleague at the Universität Basel, the classicist Prof. Dr Joachim Latacz. In the ninth minute, he improved my understanding of the *Phaedrus* passage discussed in this article and indicated to me the most recent scholarly material of relevance.

- 335 al-Ġāziz (1965, vol. 1, p. 69).
 336 For the following, cf. Sergeant (1983, p. 114 f., 128–140).
 337 Cf. pp. 82–83.
 338 Ibn Hišām (1955, vol. 1, p. 501 f.) [= (1967, pp. 231 ff.)]; the German translation can be found in Wellhausen (1889b); cf. also Sergeant (1983, p. 134–139); Rubin (1985); Lecker (2004).

- 339 Ibn Hišām (1955, vol. 2, pp. 317 ff.) [= (1967, p. 504 f.)].
 340 Ibn Saʿd (1904–1906, vol. 1, pt 2, pp. 15–38); cf. n. 512. Cf. also Lecker (2005).
 341 Qays ibn al-Hajjūn (1962, p. 64, v. 23).
 342 Apparently, Ḥarāzī was less widespread in Medina than in Mecca before Islam. On the authority of al-Wāqidī, al-Balādhūrī lists eleven literate tribesmen from the Aws and Ḥazraġ (apart from "a number of Jews who had learned how to write Arabic"). Among them, however, we find personalities who played such an important role in the written recording of the Qurʾān such as Zayd ibn Ḥābit and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb; see al-Balādhūrī (1865–1866, p. 473 f., the last page of the work). Cf. Endress's chapter on the Arabic script in Fischer (1982, vol. 1, p. 171, n. 40) with further references.
 It remains to be ascertained whether the reference to *ṣahīf* by the Medinese poet Qays ibn al-Hajjūn (see above) contradicts the alleged scarcity of literate people in contemporary Medina.
 343 Ḥassān ibn Ṭābit (1971, vol. 2, pp. 16 ff.). Cf. Sergeant (1983, p. 129); al-Asad (1978, p. 171).
 344 Ibn Hišām (1955, vol. 1, p. 350) [= (1967, p. 159)]. Cf. Sergeant (1983, p. 131); al-Asad (1978, p. 171).
 345 However, Noth (1973, p. 62) [= (1994, p. 65)] has only found four such cases in his study of the treaties Muslims concluded with conquered peoples during the phase of territorial expansion.
 346 Ibn Hišām (1955, vol. 2, p. 317); Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 1, p. 12).
 347 In this case as well as for other cultural phenomena, we find parallels between Arab and Germanic antiquity: in numerous runic inscriptions, the scribes self-confidently recorded their own names (with the so-called "rune master formulae"), for example, "Harnahu is my name." Cf. von See (1971, p. 109).
 348 See p. 83.
 349 In this context, we should mention the legend—attested insufficiently and very late (only in the fourth/tenth century)—that the famous ancient Arabic *qasīdahs* (polythematic odes) called *al-muḥallaġāt* (literally: the "suspended") derive their name from the fact that, after being awarded a prize during the poetry contests held on occasion of the yearly markets at Ukāz, they were suspended in the Kaʿbah. In all probability, the literal meaning of the term (the correct etymology of which has not yet been established) and the memory of exceptionally important written documents being hung from the Kaʿbah in ancient times conspired to bring about the legend. (The different explanations of the term *al-muḥallaġāt* have been studied by Robson, 1936.) In my opinion, the idea that, by depositing the poems in the Kaʿbah, one would get an authentic version, an "original" of the text of the poems is not a plausible explanation in this case.
 350 al-Masʿūdī (1965–1979, vol. 4, p. 270, par. 2639); cf. al-Asad (1978, p. 171).
 351 Peterson (1926, pp. 217 ff.); Jaeger (1912, p. 138); Lieberman (1950, p. 85); Pöhlmann (1990, pp. 21, 23) with further references. Pöhlmann adds: "The deposition of books in temples can also... be found as a fictitious attestation of a source, which, however, bears all the marks of a frequently practised procedure."
 352 Peterson (1926, p. 219).
 353 Jaeger (1912, p. 138); Pöhlmann (1990, p. 23).
 354 Lieberman (1950, p. 85, n. 16).
 355 Jaeger (1912, p. 138).
 356 Ibn Hišām (1955, vol. 1, p. 608 f.) [= (1967, p. 290)]; a similar report can be found in al-Wāqidī (1966, vol. 1, p. 30); cf. al-Asad (1978, p. 67).
 357 Threats that a taunt will be preserved in writing (or hints at the fact that it had already been preserved in writing) can, from the time of the *muḥallaġamūn* (see Glossary), also occasionally be found in lampoons (*fiḡʿ*). One frequently quoted line (az-Zamajšārī,

1965, p. 53, art. *bwb*, cf. al-Huway'ah, 1892, p. 18 and Blachère 1952–1966, p. 90 by the *mubadram* (see Glossary) poet Tammim ibn Ubayy ibn Muqbil runs as follows:

Banū 'Amir, what is your command concerning a poet / who has chosen
from among the different kinds of writing to lampoon me?
Banī 'āmirin mā lammurūna bi-ṣā'irin / talayyara bābān 'l-kīlābi ḥiḡayā

We are not in a position to decide in such cases whether the poems were actually written down or whether its author merely employed a topos (the threat of written, that is, permanent, recording of the infamous act in question). At the very least, we can say that people were aware of the idea of the written recording of a poem for that very purpose. This does not, however, change the fact that, for poetry, the accustomed method of "publication" practised at the time was very different indeed (cf. p. 65ff.)

358 Wellhausen (1889a, p. 87); cf. also Sejeant (1983, pp. 139–142).

359 Sejeant (1983, p. 149 f.); Pūn (1970, pp. 57 ff., 63 ff.).

360 On this issue, cf. al-Ṭabarī (1879–1901, ser. 1, p. 1367); Ibn Haḡar al-'Asqalānī (1398/1978, vol. 1, p. 311); Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 394); Lecker (2004, pp. 194–203 and 2005, pp. 10, 12, and 14) and p. 83.

361 al-Ṭabarī (1879–1901, ser. 1, p. 1367) [= (1984–1988, vol. 7, p. 92)].

362 'Abd al-Razzāq (1970–1972, vol. 9, no. 16154); cf. also vol. 10, no. 18847.

363 Goldzher (1907, p. 862); cf. also Sejeant (1983, p. 138); Lecker (2005, p. 1).

364 On similar reports about a letter by the Prophet concerning the levy of the *ṣadaqah* (alms tax), cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 394 f.) and Lecker (2004, p. 22 f.). On the place of storage, see Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 394 f.) and p. 83.

365 Since the time of the *mubadramūn* (see Glossary), poems which contained messages were also characterized as private letters. As with the written recording of taunts (cf. n. 357), we are hard pressed to decide in each individual case whether the message was actually written down or its mention merely employed as a topos. The most prominent examples are the following: *‘a-lā ṣaḥiḡā ‘an-nī Buḡḡayran riṣālatan...* ("Ho!, deliver an epistle to Buḡayr on my behalf...") by Ka'b ibn Zuhayr (1950, p. 3, v. 1), meter: *iawīl*, rhyme: *kāz*; and *ḥiāḡa kīlābī 'iḡay-kum wa- 'n-naḡīru la-kum...* ("This is my letter to you and my warning for you...") by Laḡīṭ ibn Ya'mar al-Ḥaydī (in Abū 'l-Faraḡ al-Isfahānī 1285 n, vol. 20, p. 24), meter: *kāmīl*, rhyme: *‘a*. An additional example from the Umayyad era: Seidensticker (1983, p. 80, no. 8, v. 1), meter: *kāmīl*, rhyme: *‘a*.

366 On further written documents in early Islam (or perhaps already as early as the *ḡāhīḡah* [the period before Islam] and other writings (e.g. "promissory notes," *ṣuḡāk*, redemptions of slaves, *mukāḡabāt*, religious books, etc.), see al-Asad (1978, pp. 68 ff.).

367 On the role of the *rāwī* (transmitter) and the transmission of ancient Arabic poetry in general, cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, pp. 22 ff.) with further references, and in particular al-Asad (1978, pp. 222–254). See also pp. 102–103.

368 According to Brockelmann (1943–1949, suppl. vol. 1, p. 33).

369 Examples in Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 22).

370 The distinction between the terms *rāwī*, as tribal transmitter, on the one hand, and *rāwīyah*, as scholarly transmitter, on the other, is an artificial construct of European secondary literature; in Arabic texts, both terms can mean both types of transmitters. To simplify our discussion, we will, however, adhere to this distinction. On both categories of *rāwī*, cf. also Pellat (1953, p. 137).

371 Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī (1899, p. 25, no. 20, l. 15; p. 28, no. 20, l. 4; p. 39, no. 37). This and further references in al-Asad (1978, p. 233 f.).

372 References in al-Asad (1978, pp. 232 f., 234 ff., 222–231) and Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 25).

373 Ḡarīr and al-Farazdaq (1905–1912, vol. 2, p. 647).

374 He transmitted the *āḡwān* (collected poems) of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr and other poetry of the family of Zuhayr; cf. Abū 'l-Faraḡ al-Isfahānī (1285 n, vol. 15, p. 147).

375 Abū 'l-Faraḡ al-Isfahānī (1285 n, vol. 2, p. 59).

376 al-Marzubānī (1965, p. 199); cf. al-Asad (1978, p. 242).

377 Ta'lab (1956, p. 413).

378 Abū 'l-Faraḡ al-Isfahānī (1285 n, vol. 4, p. 54).

379 Cf. Wright (1951, vol. 2, p. 356, §199). The *ṣinād* is a type of impure rhyme, for example, *ḡumūṣā—Qurayṣā*.

380 al-Marzubānī (1965, p. 198 f.); cf. Brockelmann (1943–1949, suppl. vol. 1, p. 33).

381 al-Marzubānī (1965, p. 27 f., 150).

382 Spitaler (1989, no. 88).

383 Ḡarīr and al-Farazdaq (1905–1912, vol. 1, p. 200 f., no. 39, v. 51 ff.).

384 Ḡarīr and al-Farazdaq (1905–1912, vol. 1, p. 200 f., no. 39, v. 57).

385 Ḡarīr and al-Farazdaq (1905–1912, vol. 1, p. 200 f., no. 39, v. 61).

386 Ḡarīr and al-Farazdaq (1905–1912, vol. 2, p. 908, l. 1).

387 Ḡarīr and al-Farazdaq (1905–1912, vol. 1, p. 430, l. 12).

388 al-Mufaḡḡal ad-Dabībī (1921, p. 676, l. 9).

389 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 37).

390 See Chapter 5, especially pp. 114–116 and pp. 125–127 (= Schoeler, 1989, especially pp. 217 ff., 232 ff.).

391 al-Marzubānī (1965, p. 280).

392 al-Kalā'ī (1966, p. 235 f.). I am grateful to Prof. S. Bonebakker for introducing me to this work and the reference.

393 Pellat (1953, p. 137).

394 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 92) [= (1970, p. 198)].

395 Abū 'l-Faraḡ al-Isfahānī (1285 n, vol. 5, p. 174); cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 28).

396 Goldzher (1897, especially p. 126 f.).

397 Brāu (1927, p. 10 f.).

398 On p. 68.

399 Abū Nuwās (1958, vol. 1, p. 317, l. 3; also p. 311, l. 12).

400 al-Ḡāhīz (1367/1948, vol. 1, p. 321).

401 al-Ḡāhīz (1367/1948, vol. 1, p. 320, l. 15).

402 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 69, l. 6) [= (1970, p. 152)].

403 Yaḡūf (1923–1930, vol. 7, p. 8).

404 See Chapter 1, p. 41 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 226).

405 Chapter 5, p. 127 (= Schoeler, 1989a, p. 234).

406 Chapter 5, p. 116 (= Schoeler, 1989a, p. 220).

407 Kister (1970, p. 29 ff.), citing Ahmad ibn Abī Ṭāhūr's *Kiṡāb al-manā'ir wa-'l-manā'ir* (*The Book of Scattered [Prose] and Strung [Verse]*); Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 47).

408 But cf. p. 81.

409 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 68) [= (1970, p. 151)]. Additional information about the reports on the genesis of the collection and further references can be found in R. Jacobi's article *al-Mufaḡḡalīyah* in *IE*, vol. 7, p. 306 f.

410 as-Suyūfī (n.d., vol. 2, p. 319); Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 53).

411 Cf. n. 409. Today, the collection comprises 126 poems.

412 al-Ḥaṡb al-Baḡḡadī (1931, vol. 1, p. 220 f.). According to this report, the papyri (or parchments; *qar'ā'īs*) Ibn Ishāq wrote his book on—that is, the autograph from which the caliph's copy was probably made—were inherited by his student

Salamah ibn al-Faql. He (and he alone!) was to use this material for subsequent transmission.

- 413 Al-Samuk (1978, especially p. 165).
- 414 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luġawī (1955, p. 91 f.).
- 415 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 68) [= (1970, p. 150)].
- 416 Chapter 2, pp. 49–50 (= Schoeler, 1989b, p. 48 ff.).
- 417 Abū 'ī-Tayyib al-Luġawī (1955, p. 65).
- 418 al-Farra' (1972, vol. 1, p. 1).
- 419 The epistle was edited by Ritter (1933). Cf. also van Ess (1977, p. 18), who dates the text between 75/694 and 80/699, and Cook (1981, p. 117–123), who places it a few decades later.
- 420 Edited, translated, and studied by van Ess (1977, pp. 43–57/Arab., pp. 113 ff./Germ.). While van Ess dates it around 100/718, Cook (1981, pp. 124–136) considers it to be a few decades later.
- 421 Edited and studied by van Ess (1974, pp. 20–25). Dated by van Ess in the year 75/694 and by Cook (1981, pp. 68–88) no earlier than the second half of the second/eighth century.
- 422 van Ess (1974, p. 25).
- 423 Cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, pp. 419 ff.). Malik ibn Anas's (d. 179/795) *Kitāb al-muwāṭṭaʿ* (The Book of the Well-Trodden Path), which may be earlier than the *Kitāb al-ḥarāṭ* (The Book of Land-Tax), is a collection of legally relevant traditions and opinions (ʿarṣ), not yet a conclusively edited book.
- 424 The first few lines of the work run as follows:

*hādā mā karība bi-hi'Abū Yūsuf... ʿilāʿamīn al-muʿminīn Ḥarūn ar-Raʿīd:
waʿāla ʾlḥnu baḡaʿa ʿamīrī ʾl-muʿminīn wa-ʿadāma la-hū ʾl-izz fī tanāmin
min an-nimāh wa-dawāmin min al-karamah ʿinna ʿamra ʾl-muʿminīn
na... saʿala-ni ʿan ʿasnaʿa la-hu kitāban ḡamīṣan ysmālu bi-hi fī ḡibṣawāt
ʿl-ḥarāṭ wa-ʾl-saṣūrī wa-ʾs-sadaḡāt wa-ʾl-ḡaliyāt wa-ḡayrī dālika
minimā yaḡibhu ʿalay-hi n-nazaru fī-hi wa-ʾl-ʿamdu bi-hi...*

This is what Abū Yūsuf wrote to... the Emir of the Believers Ḥarūn ar-Raʿīd. May Allāh prolong the existence of the Emir of the Believers and perpetuate greatness for him, in perfect beauty and in constant blessing. The Emir of the Believers... requested me to compose for him a comprehensive book in accordance with which the land-tax, the tithe, the poll-tax and other taxes which need to be checked and collected, could be calculated at the time of their levying.

- 425 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 203 l. 14) [= (1970, p. 503)]: *Kitāb riṣālati-hi fī ʾl-ḥarāṭ ʿilā ʾr-Raʿīd* (The Book of his Epistle to Ḥarūn ar-Raʿīd on Land-Tax).
- 426 Cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 519).
- 427 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 117) [= (1970, p. 257)]: Brokelmann (1943–1949, suppl. vol. 1, p. 105); El², vol. 1, p. 65 f.
- 428 Note the beginnings of the use of syntactic parallelisms in the introduction to Abū Yūsuf's *Riṣālah* quoted (cf. n. 424), a stylistic device typical of the secretarial *riṣālah*: cf. Latham (1983, pp. 175 ff.).
- 429 On this and the following, cf. the fundamental works by Nöldeke (1909–1938, vols 2 and 3); Jeffery (1952, pp. 89 ff.); Blachère (1959, pp. 12 ff., 27 ff., 52 ff.); Watt (1977, especially pp. 30–56, 135–144); Neuwrith, *Koran*, in Gärtje (1987, vol. 2, pp. 96–135, especially pp. 101–104); Welch's article *Kurʾān* in El², vol. 5, pp. 400–432, especially pp. 403 ff.
- 430 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 1, pp. 45 ff.; vol. 2, pp. 1 ff.); Sayed (1977, p. 280).

- 431 Neuwrith, *Koran*, p. 102 in Gärtje (1987, vol. 2); Watt (1977, p. 37, 136); Bellamy (1973, p. 271).
- 432 They are listed in Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 1, p. 46, n. 5).
- 433 Cf. Sprenger (1869, vol. 3, p. XXXV); Watt (1977, p. 136).
- 434 Cf. Neuwrith, *Koran*, p. 102 in Gärtje (1987, vol. 2).
- 435 The first scholar to point this out was R. Bell; cf. Watt (1977, pp. 137 ff.). See especially the comprehensive study by Nagel (1983).
- 436 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 1, p. 32 ff.); Welch, art. *Kurʾān* in El², vol. 5, p. 400 f.; Watt (1977, pp. 135 ff.); Neuwrith, *Koran*, p. 102 in Gärtje (1987, vol. 2). The Syriac term *ḡaryanzā* has itself the double meaning of *anagnōsis* (reading, recitation, and lecture) and *anagnōsma* (what is read, the passage read out, and lectionary). Cf. Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 1, p. 34).
- 437 J. Burton (1977) has argued for a different version of events. He maintains that Muhammad himself edited the Qurʾān. This is not the place for a detailed critique of Burton's hypothesis; however, I believe that consideration of the context in which the history of the redaction of the Qurʾān took place, as given in this study, serves to strengthen the position of one reviewer of Burton's book, who wrote:

The passage from "a codex" in the Prophet's estate, which would in any case already have been confronted with a substantial number of Qurʾān readers (together with their written notes), to a uniform written text disseminated into each province of a vast empire is very long indeed. To pass over the problems connected with this passage in silence... would be a gross oversimplification. If we did not have any reports about Companion codices and later *ʿamsār* [provincial capitals] codices, we would have to postulate their existence!

(Neuwrith, 1981, p. 376)

- 438 ad-Dānī (1932, p. 6, l. 13 f.); Ibn Abī Dāwūd (1936–1937, p. 7, l. 1 f., 18, p. 8, l. 4; p. 10, l. 19); further references in Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 13).
- 439 Ibn Abī Dāwūd (1936–1937, p. 7, l. 1; p. 10, l. 19).
- 440 ad-Dānī (1932, p. 3, l. 12); Ibn Abī Dāwūd (1936–1937, p. 5, several places).
- 441 Cf. the *Kitāb faḍaʾil al-Qurʾān* (The Book of the Virtues of the Qurʾān), chapter *Ġamʿ al-Qurʾān* (The Collection of the Qurʾān) in al-Buḡarī's *al-Ġamʿ as-saḥīḥ* (The Sound Compilation), contained in Ibn Hāǧar al-ʿAsqalānī (1398/1978, pt. 19, pp. 12 ff.); ad-Dānī (1932, pp. 3 ff.); Ibn Abī Dāwūd (1936–1937, pp. 5 ff.); Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, pp. 11 ff.); Sayed (1977, pp. 286 ff.).
- 442 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 21 ff.).
- 443 Already suggested by Sprenger (1869, vol. 3, p. XLII) and later by Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 21). Recent research unanimously agrees, cf. Watt (1977, p. 41 f.); Blachère (1959, p. 34); Neuwrith, *Koran*, p. 103 f. in Gärtje (1987, vol. 2).
- 444 Cf. Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 27 ff.); Blachère (1959, p. 34).
- 445 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, pp. 15, 24 f.).
- 446 In contexts in which both of Zayd's collections—the earlier one under Abū Bakr and the later one under ʿUṣmān—are mentioned, the former is usually called *ṣuḥuf*, the latter *muḥaf*. Cf. ad-Dānī (1932, pp. 5, l. 4, 8; pp. 7, l. 3, 5) and Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 25 with n. 2).
- 447 Cf. n. 440.
- 448 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 24); Neuwrith, *Koran*, p. 101 in Gärtje (1987, vol. 2).
- 449 Cf. n. 439.
- 450 Sayed (1977, p. 281 f.).
- 451 About them, cf. Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, pp. 5 ff.); Paret's article *Kirāʾa* in El², vol. 5, pp. 127 ff. and, more recently, Sayed (1977).

- 452 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 57 ff.).
 453 Beck (1946, p. 209).
 454 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 47 ff.).
 455 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 1, p. 48 f.).
 456 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, pp. 48 ff.); Sayed (1977, p. 292 f.).
 457 Ibn Abī Dāwūd (1936–1937, p. 24, l. 12 ff.).
 458 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 49); Beck (1947).
 459 According to Bergsträsser and Pretzl in Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 119).
 460 Ibn Abī Dāwūd (1936–1937, p. 13, l. 7 ff.).
 461 at-Tabarī (1879–1901, ser. 1, p. 2952) [= (1984–1988, vol. 15, p. 156)].
 462 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 116 f.; vol. 3, pp. 95, 104 f., 147); Beck (1945, p. 355 f.) (against Nöldeke 1909–1938, vol. 2, p. 116 f.).
 463 Cf. pp. 65–67.
 464 at-Tabarī (1321 H, vol. 1, p. 17, l. 8); cf. Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 105); Beck (1945, p. 372).
 465 On this issue, see Juynboll (1983, p. 52).
 466 Beck (1946, p. 208).
 467 Beck (1946, p. 208).
 468 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, pp. 6 ff.); Beck (1947).
 469 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, pp. 1 ff.; vol. 3, p. 121); Beck (1945, especially p. 361 f.).
 470 Beck (1946, p. 210).
 471 Cf. n. 469.
 472 al-Farrā'ī (1972, vol. 2, p. 183 f.); cf. Beck (1945, p. 360).
 473 Cf. Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, pp. 127 ff.); Beck (1946, especially pp. 222 ff.).
 474 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 205).
 475 Bergsträsser (1926, p. 11).
 476 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 205).
 477 Ibn al-Gazarī (1933–1935, vol. 1, no. 874, 22, 755, 1581, 1965, 1377). These and other references can be found in Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 206 with n. 1).
 478 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 205–208).
 479 See Chapters 1 and 2 (= Schoeler, 1985, 1989).
 480 See Chapter 2, p. 54 (= Schoeler, 1989, p. 57 f.).
 481 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 5).
 482 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 6 ff.).
 483 The difference between *hypomēmata* and *synggrammata* is similar to, but not identical with, the difference between *kitābah* (written record) and *taḍwīn* (collection on a large scale) on the one hand and *tasnif* (material systematically arranged into thematic chapters) on the other (cf. Sezgin, 1967–, vol. 1, p. 55 ff.). For example, in the field of *ḥadīṡ*, most of the *muṣnafaʿ* of the second/eighth century (Saʿīd ibn Abī ʿArūbah, Wakīʿ ibn al-Garrāh etc.) are not yet *synggrammata*, but *hypomēmata* (see Chapter 5, pp. 114–115 = Schoeler, 1989, p. 219).
 484 See p. 176, n. 100 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 208, n. 39) with references.
 485 Ullmann *et al.* (1970–, vol. 1, p. 40 ff., art. *Kitāb*).
 486 See Chapter 1 above, p. 36 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 216 f.) and Schoeler (1986, p. 123).
 487 Sellheim (1976, vol. 1, pp. 33–43).
 488 Sellheim (1976, vol. 1, p. 33, 41 f.).
 489 Sellheim (1976, vol. 1, p. 36).
 490 Ibn al-Ġazarī (1933–1935, vol. 1, p. 514, no. 2125); cf. Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 145, n. 8).
 491 Sellheim (1976, vol. 1, p. 36, 38).
 492 Chapter 1, p. 42 and Chapter 2, p. 59 point (7) and p. 60 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 227 f. and 1989b, pp. 65 and 66).

- 493 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 146, n. 1).
 494 Sellheim (1976, vol. 1, p. 41).
 495 Cf. for example Sellheim (1961, p. 67); on this issue, see Chapter 1, p. 41 with n. 168 and 169 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 225 f. with n. 107 and 108).
 496 Sellheim (1976, vol. 1, p. 38).
 497 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 206) and our n. 477.
 498 Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 5).
 499 Sellheim (1976, vol. 1, p. 34 f.).
 500 Ibn ʿAṭīyah (1954, p. 276).
 501 Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 104, n. 1; p. 261 f.); Blachère (1959, p. 75 ff.).
 502 Cf. now Schoeler 2002b (pp. 58–70).
 503 The letters are preserved in at-Tabarī (1879–1901, ser. 1, pp. 1181 and 1284 ff.) [= (1984–1988, vol. 6, p. 98 f., and vol. 7, pp. 28 ff.)]; cf. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 1, p. 278) with further references.
 504 az-Zubayr ibn Bakkar (1972, p. 331 ff.); cf. Jarrar (1989, pp. 15 ff.). The passage in question (az-Zubayr ibn Bakkar, 1972, p. 332) runs as follows:
- He [sc. Sulaymān] then ordered Abān ibn ʿUṭmān to write down for him the reports about the life (*ṣiyar*) and the campaigns (*magāzī*) of the Prophet. Abān said: “I already have it [sc. the biography] (*ḥiyaʿ* *ṣināʿ*). I have received it in confirmed [or: corrected] form (*muṣahḥatan*) from people I trust.” Thereupon, he [sc. Sulaymān] ordered it to be copied and gave it to ten scribes. They wrote it down on parchment.

- 505 Cf. on this subject Chapter 5, pp. 121–124 (= Schoeler, 1989, p. 227 ff.).
 506 As Bergsträsser and Pretzl also maintain in Nöldeke (1909–1938, vol. 3, p. 104, n. 1).
 507 Cf. Schacht (1950, p. 188); Tyan (1945, p. 5 f.); Wakīm (1972, p. 5 f.); and Brunschwig’s article *Bayyina* in *IE*², vol. 1, p. 1150 f. Following Migne (1862–1980, vol. 94, p. 768), Schacht points out that John of Damascus (675–749) already recognized this feature as a characteristic trait of Islamic law. His further observation, however, is incorrect: “This feature [i.e. the restriction of legal proof to the evidence of witnesses and the denial of validity to written documents] contradicts an explicit ruling of the Koran (ii, 282), which obviously endorsed the current practice of putting contracts into writing.”
 Schacht overlooks the close connection mentioned above between the two Qurʾānic instructions to record in writing *and* to consult witnesses.
 508 at-Ṭahāwī (1972, p. 1 f.).
 509 Tyan (1945, p. 5 f.); Brunschwig, art. *Bayyina* in *IE*², vol. 1, p. 1150 f.
 510 Tyan (1945, p. 6) with references from Ibn ʿAbidin, at-Ramli, al-Marghinānī, Ibn Nuġaym, and aṣ-Ṣāfiʿī.
 511 Ibn Abī Dāwūd (1936–1937, p. 10 f.).
 512 Ibn Saʿd (1904–1906, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 15–38); German translation in Wellhausen (1889).
 513 See p. 63.
 514 One exception is al-Wāqidi (1966, vol. 3, p. 1032); Ibn Saʿd (1904–1906, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 30, l. 3 ff.; p. 36, l. 18 ff.; p. 37, l. 20 ff.). Cf. Wellhausen (1989a, p. 89).
 515 In contrast to later perceptions, in the *ġāhiliyyah* (period before Islam), writing was highly respected; cf. p. 63f.
 516 On the following discussion, cf. the interesting remarks in Kaplan (1933, pp. 268 ff.).
 517 On the transition from orality to literacy in Greek literature, cf. Pöhlmann (1990, especially pp. 24 ff.); the author places the critical period in the second half of the fifth century BCE, which covers Socrates’ lifetime (469–399). Plato wrote his *Phaedrus* c. 50 years later as a fiction. Cf. also Kullmann (1990, p. 319), who argues that, at the

- end of the fifth and in the first half of the fourth century, "people became aware of the problems caused by the triumph of this medium." On Plato's criticism of writing, cf. also Szlezák (1990). [See Britson (1998), especially the introduction by Naddaf.]
- 518 English translation by Rowe (2000, pp. 123 ff.).
- 519 This argument is similar to that of some traditionists against the written recording of *ḥadīṭ*: it is to be feared that people who make notes rely too much on the written word, which is short-lived, at the expense of properly memorizing (cf. Chapter 5, p. 118 = Schoeler, 1989, p. 223).
- 520 Compare the dictum by al-Awzāʿī (d. 157/774), founder of a legal *madhhab* (school, or rite): "This science [sc. *ḥadīṭ*] was (once) a noble matter, when people still received it (in lectures) But when it entered into books, it lost its shine . . ." (Cf. Chapter 5, p. 121 = Schoeler, 1989, p. 226).
- 521 A further argument advanced by traditionists against the written recording of *ḥadīṭ*s claimed that traditions recorded in writing would fall into the wrong hands: those of the unauthorized (Chapter 5, pp. 118 and 121 = Schoeler, 1989, pp. 223, 227).
- 522 The idea that the written word needs support, that the author has to intervene if the written text was to be correctly understood (and read), was the basis of the main argument of the Arab scholars for the necessity of "heard"/"audited" transmission (*ar-rivāyah al-masmi'ah, samāʿ*) or for the deficiencies of "merely written" transmission (*kitābah*); see Chapter 1, p. 42; Chapter 2, p. 60, and p. 59, especially points (2), (6), and (7); and Chapter 5, p. 129 = Schoeler (1985, p. 227 f.; 1989a, pp. 66, 64 f., especially points 2, 6, and 7; 1989b, p. 237).
- 523 The Christian Arab physician Ibn Buṭlān (d. 458/1066) put forward the following argument for oral instruction by a teacher and against the copying of material from books: "The spoken word is not as far removed from the intended meaning as the written The written word . . . is no more than a similitude." (cf. Chapter 2, p. 59 = Schoeler, 1989, p. 65).
- Note the fictitious orality Plato bestows on his books by using the dialog form and compare it to the procedure adopted by the traditionist Ibn Abī Saybāh (d. 235/849). At the beginning of several chapters of his monumental *Muṣannaf* (work divided into thematic chapters, systematically arranged), he presents his compilation as follows: "This is what I know by heart from the Prophet." (cf. Chapter 5, p. 115 = Schoeler, 1989, p. 220).
- 524 For the following discussion, cf. Strack (1921, p. 14); Kaplan (1933, pp. 265 ff.); Weil (1939); Schäfer (1978); and Chapter 5 below, pp. 119–120 (= Schoeler, 1989a, p. 225).
- 525 Chapter 5, p. 117 (= Schoeler, 1989a, p. 221).
- 526 Cf. Chapter 1, p. 42; Chapter 2, p. 60; and Chapter 5, p. 129 (= Schoeler, 1985, p. 227 f.; 1989, p. 66; 1989, p. 237).
- 527 In later times, one phenomenon aptly illustrated this often strange preference of oral, or aural, transmission, which stood in sharp contrast to the frequent practice of merely copying books: the *ṣiḡṣah* system (cf. Goldziner, 1890, vol. 2, p. 188 ff. = [1971, vol. 2, pp. 175 ff.]). Another relevant practice was the addition of so-called "introductory *ṣināds*" (*riwāyāt*) to certain high-quality manuscripts, mostly containing religious works, but sometimes also secular literature. Ideally, they linked the last owner of the manuscript via an unbroken line of authorized transmitters with its author through "heard"/"audited" transmission (*ṣamāʿ, qirāʾah*: "A has told me" or "I have read before B"); cf. Goldziner (1890, vol. 2, p. 192) [= (1971, vol. 2, p. 178 f.)] and Chapter 2, p. 50 (= Schoeler, 1989b, p. 51).
- 528 Nyberg (1938, pp. 9 ff.; cf. also 13 f.).
- 529 Elad (2003).
- 530 Elad (2003, p. 123).
- 531 Cf. p. 81 with n. 504.

- 532 Examples in Schoeler (2002b, pp. 53, 78).
- 533 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–1872, vol. 1, p. 68) [= (1970, p. 150)].

4 ORAL POETRY THEORY AND ARABIC LITERATURE

- 534 Haymes (1977) has written a clear, concise, and critical introduction to oral poetry research; he has also compiled a bibliography, which gives a good impression of the amount of work undertaken in this field (Haymes, 1973). The last chapter of Latacz (1979a) contains a valuable specialized bibliography on the oral poetry theory. A sample of titles of interest for Middle Eastern Studies specialists is listed in Monroe (1972, p. 9 f., n. 2). In the introduction to the volume of articles on Homer which he edited, Latacz (1979a, especially pp. 2–5) comments on the immense impact which oral poetry theory has had on literary studies. [See further Foley (1988) and Finnegan (1992).]
- 535 This chapter is also a review of M. Zwettler's *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implication* (Zwettler, 1978). A note on terminology: for the following discussion, I will define a *qasidah* as a long, polythematic poem in Arabic, usually introduced by a *nasīb* (elegiac section). The "ancient Arabic" poetry dealt with in this article comprises both pre- and early-Islamic poetry.
- 536 For the following discussion, see Parry (1971a, pp. 439 ff.) and the following studies: A. Parry (1971, p. XXX ff.); Lord (1971, p. 467); Voorvinden and de Haan (1979, p. 1 f.); Heubeck (1974, pp. 130–134); von See (1978, p. 15–23, especially p. 15).
- 537 Parry (1928) translated into English as Parry (1971d).
- 538 Cf. Heubeck (1974, p. 132 f.). The change in Parry's position is particularly visible in Parry (1971c). The issue is discussed in more detail in Lord (1971, pp. 467 ff., especially p. 467).
- 539 See the bibliographies listed in n. 534 and the introduction to Voorvinden and de Haan (1979), especially p. 1 f.
- 540 Lord (1960).
- 541 Parry (1971a, p. XXII). A more recent, even-handed assessment of Parry's achievements can be found in Latacz (1979b, p. 39). In short, the formulaic character of the Homeric language had already been pointed out before Parry by, among others, A. Meillet. In his analysis of Homer's "Kunstsprache" (artificial language), Parry based his research on the findings of K. Wille and K. Meister. Finally, Parry and his student Lord undertook their later travels in Yugoslavia in the footsteps of the Prague Slavic Studies expert M. Murko, who already prepared phonographic records of oral Serbo-Croat folk epics on site before the first World War. See immediately below for Radloff's influence on Parry.
- 542 von See (1978, p. 21). We hope that von See's observation helps to make Radloff's achievements more widely known outside Middle Eastern Studies.
- 543 Radloff (1885).
- 544 Radloff (1885, p. IV, XVI ff.).
- 545 Radloff (1885, p. XIV, XVIII ff.).
- 546 Radloff (1885, p. XVII).
- 547 Radloff (1885, p. XVII).
- 548 Radloff (1885, p. XVI ff.). It is alarming that Lord (1960, p. 30) labels this observation by Radloff as Parry's "almost (!) revolutionary idea."
- 549 Radloff (1885, p. XX ff.).
- 550 Radloff (1885, p. XX).
- 551 Meier (1909, pp. 11–17).
- 552 Gesemann (1926, p. 67) writes: "The new aspect Meier has pointed out to us is an insight he drew from the works of the outstanding Radloff: in the study of oral folk epic, we have to take the factor of improvisation adequately into account."

- 553 Meier (1909, p. 34) lists the following classicists: Pöhlmann, Drenup, and Imnisch.
 554 On the Arabic folk epic, see pp. 104–105 with n. 681 and 682.
 555 Zwettler (1978).
 556 Monroe (1972).
 557 Zwettler (1978, pp. 43–50).
 558 Zwettler (1978, p. 24).
 559 Zwettler (1978, p. 23).
 560 Zwettler (1978, pp. 25 ff., especially p. 26).
 561 Zwettler (1978, p. 28).
 562 His results are assembled in Zwettler (1978, pp. 235–262, appendix A).
 563 Parry (1971b, p. 272) defines a formula as “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea.” See also Lord (1960, pp. 30–67, especially p. 30).
 564 Zwettler (1978, p. 6, 44, 50 f.).
 565 Zwettler (1978, p. 51 ff.).
 566 Illustrated with diagrams in Zwettler (1978, p. 61).
 567 Zwettler (1978, p. 62).
 568 Zwettler (1978, pp. 64–77).
 569 Zwettler (1978, pp. 77–84).
 570 Zwettler (1978, especially p. 98–102, 146–149, 170 ff.).
 571 Zwettler (1978, pp. 189, 212, 225, and *passim*).
 572 Zwettler (1978, especially pp. 212 ff., 219 f.).
 573 Zwettler (1978, p. 193 f.).
 574 Zwettler (1978, pp. 206 ff.).
 575 Zwettler (1978, pp. 189, 191); quotation from R. Menéndez Pidal.
 576 Zwettler (1978, p. 206).
 577 Zwettler (1978, pp. 207, 220).
 578 Zwettler (1978, pp. 212–215).
 579 Zwettler (1978, p. 197 f.).
 580 Zwettler (1978, pp. 222 ff. and 200).
 581 Zwettler (1978, p. 34).
 582 Haynes (1977, p. 14 ff.); Schaar (1979, p. 73 f.) (the following quotations are taken from this study); Lutz (1979, p. 257 f.).
 583 Haynes (1977, p. 14) and p. 94.
 584 Curschmann (1967, p. 48). [On Walther and the German lyric in general, see Sayce (1982) and Dronke (1990). For an interesting discussion of the transition from oral to written tradition in Medieval Europe, see Rifàterre (1991).]
 585 Other examples of highly formulaic poetry, which certainly belong to written culture, are the Anglo-Saxon poems of Cynewulf and related poets; cf. Schaar (1979, pp. 74–77). [For examples of Anglo-Saxon poetry, see Raffel and Olsen (1998); see also Godden and Lapidge (1991).]
 586 Zwettler (1978, p. 23).
 587 Zwettler (1978, p. 15, 23).
 588 See Bäumel (1979, pp. 242–245, especially p. 245).
 589 In oral poetry, the formulae fulfil two functions: according to Meier (1935–1936, vol. 1, p. 27), a folk song researcher whose work has been studied by Parry, the formula serves “on the one hand to help the singer to improvise and on the other, to evoke, in the way of a *leitmotiv*, earlier occurrences [sc. of the same formula and its context].” In highly formulaic written poetry, the first function of the formula ceases to apply, while the other remains. A more detailed description of the audience-centered function of the formula can be found in Schröder (1967, p. 11): “the ‘formula’ (is here) the appropriate expression” for “the portrayal of a ‘total’ world.” Regarding

- Homer, F. Dirlmeier writes: formulae were “not regarded by the audience as symptomatic of poetical ‘weaknesses,’ but as ‘welcome confirmations of a world they were familiar with’” (quoted in von See 1978, p. 17).
 590 Again from the article by Curschmann (1967, pp. 50 ff.).
 591 Cf. Curschmann (1967, p. 51 f.) and Bäumel (1979, p. 244 f., especially p. 250, n. 26).
 592 This is also the position of F. Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 22; cf. also pp. 31, 36). He points to the role of writing as a means of recording, occasionally at least, pre-Islamic poetry without, however, claiming “that all *rawis* [transmitters] of the *ghāfilīyah* [the period before Islam] were able to write down the poems they transmitted.” Surprisingly, Zwettler (1978, p. 96, n. 117) accepts Sezgin’s arguments.
 593 Zwettler (1978, p. 28 f.).
 594 Zwettler (1978, pp. 215, 222, especially p. 229 f., n. 70). [See also O’Donoghue (2003).]
 595 von See (1971, p. 109).
 596 Goldziber (1896a).
 597 More on this on pp. 104–105. Incidentally, the authors or transmitters of the ancient Arabic prose form (*ṣayyām al-ard*, battle days of the Arabs), which emerged at the same time as ancient Arabic poetry, are also anonymous.
 598 Zwettler (1978, p. 198–204); the quotation is taken from p. 204.
 599 Zwettler (1978, p. 198–204); the quotation is taken from p. 202.
 600 Zwettler (1978, p. 29).
 601 Genzmer (1926). His claim has been disputed by von See (1961).
 602 Blachère (1952–66, p. 87).
 603 Wagner (1964, p. 290).
 604 For example, Abū Hifṣān (1954, pp. 17, 29, 47, 82, 106, 111). On the subject of improvisation, see Ibn Rašīq al-Qayrawānī (1972a, vol. 1, pp. 189–196); on Abū Nuwās as an ad-lib poet, p. 190 f.; on the distinction between *badī‘an* and *irtigālān*, pp. 189 and 195 f.
 605 Ibn Rašīq al-Qayrawānī (1972a, vol. 1, p. 193).
 606 Zwettler (1978, p. 188, n. 158).
 607 Schoeler (1979, p. 54).
 608 Bräunlich (1937, p. 214 f.).
 609 Lord (1960, pp. 13–29, especially p. 26).
 610 Cf. Blachère (1952–1966, p. 88).
 611 al-Ġāhiz (1367/1948, vol. 2, pp. 9, 13).
 612 These are the two key statements by al-Ġāhiz on this subject, not the one quoted by Monroe (1972, p. 11 f.). In his quotation, it is ancient Arabic *orators* who, contrary to Persian ones, had the gift of improvisation. (Of course, this also applies to poets; however, this is not mentioned here.)
 613 al-Ġāhiz (1367/1948, vol. 1, p. 206 f.).
 614 Ibn Qutaybah (1947, p. 15).
 615 Ibn Qutaybah (1947, p. 27 f. and 26 f.).
 616 Ibn Rašīq al-Qayrawānī (1972a, vol. 1, p. 190). He mentions only one more example of an improvised *qaṣīdah* by ‘Abīd ibn al-‘Abrās.
 617 Blachère (1952–1966, p. 87).
 618 Zwettler (1978, p. 217). In this context, the author discusses Bateson (1970, p. 34 f.), who resolutely rejected the application of the Parry/Lord theory to ancient Arabic *qaṣīdah* poetry.
 619 Cf. Blachère (1952–1966, p. 88). He sums up the relevant observations made on site by A. Socin, A. Musil, and others. See also the quote from Musil (1908) on p. 102.
 620 Bowra (1962).
 621 Bowra (1962, p. 35).

- 622 Bowra (1962, p. 35 f.).
 623 Ullmann (1966, pp. 1, 18, 24, 26).
 624 See Meier (1935–1936, vol. 1, p. 29).
 625 Ahlwardt (1870, no. 21, v. 1).
 626 al-Gāhiz (1367/1948, vol. 2, p. 12 f.); Ibn Qutaybah (1947, p. 16).
 627 Sa'īd, the son of the caliph 'Utmān ibn 'Affān (r. 23–35/644–656).
 628 Parry (1971d, p. 334).
 629 Ḥassān ibn Tābit (1971, vol. 1, p. 53, no. 8, v. 19).
 630 Muṣṭī (1928, p. 283).
 631 Zwettler (1978, p. 64).
 632 Ibn Raṣīq al-Qayrawānī (1972b, for example, pp. 22, 41) on Imru' al-Qays/Zuhayr and Imru' al-Qays/Tarfaḥ respectively.
 633 Ibn Raṣīq al-Qayrawānī (1972a, vol. 2, p. 281). See also von Grunebaum (1944, p. 107, point 3).
 634 Zwettler (1978, p. 64).
 635 Zwettler (1978, p. 83), quoting Ṭabulsi (1955, p. 197).
 636 See also von Grunebaum (1944, pp. 237, 238; 241 f., especially n. 71; 243, V, point 1; and 244, VI, point 1).
 637 Cf. p. 89, with n. 564.
 638 Zwettler (1978, p. 192).
 639 Ahlwardt (1870, in the Arabic text, pp. 116 ff., 103 ff., respectively).
 640 Ahlwardt (1872, pp. 68 ff.).
 641 Ahlwardt (1872, p. 70).
 642 Zwettler (1978, pp. 62, 213, 236).
 643 Ahlwardt (1872, p. 74).
 644 In Parry (1971b, p. 275, n. 1), words with fewer than five syllables do not count as formulae; Zwettler (1978, p. 57) operates on different criteria. In my opinion, the number of syllables cannot be the decisive factor in identifying a formula. I think that the *frequency* with which an expression is used is much more important. In other words, it is crucial whether, in a certain place, an expression appears familiar to a listener or reader. One example for such a formula would be *da-hā* ("leave her") or *daṣ ḍā* ("leave that"), which frequently marks the transition between the *nasīb* (elegiac section) and the next theme; see immediately below, especially n. 653.
 645 Could that not have been what 'Antarah meant by "patching up" (cf. p. 96)?
 646 Zwettler (1978, p. 55).
 647 Minton (1965).
 648 Henbeck (1974, p. 138).
 649 Zwettler (1978, p. 253).
 650 For aṣ-Ṣamardai, see Abū Nuwās (1972, p. 325) and Seidensticker (1983, nos. 20, 39, 40 f.); for Abū Nuwās himself, see Abū Nuwās (1972, p. 177 f.) and the quoted verses *ibid.*, pp. 202 and 229.
 651 For example, in Ahlwardt (1870): p. 129 (Arabic), no. 20, v. 28 (*fa-da-hā*; meter: *iawīl*; Imru' al-Qays); p. 81 (Arabic), no. 4, v. 4 (*daṣ ḍā*; meter: *kāmil*; Zuhayr); Ibn Qutaybah (1947): p. 14 (*daṣ ḍā*; meter: *ragāz*; anon.).
 652 See n. 563.
 653 The formula *daṣ ḍā*, *fa-da-hā* ("leave that," "so leave her") etc. in a *nasīb* (elegiac section, discussed above) is an expression of what R. Jacobi calls the "consolation motif." The same motif, however, can also be expressed differently, for example, with *fa-ṣaḍdi samā' tarā*, "so turn aside from what you see"; *fa-ṣazzaynu naṣī'i*, "then I consoled myself"; *fa-sallaynu mā 'indī*, "the I found solace for my [feelings]"; cf. Jacobi (1971, p. 51). Incidentally, Zwettler (1978, p. 54 f.) misses in the ancient

- Arabic *qasīdah* the principle of economy, which Parry had detected in Homer and which he considered typical for improvised recitations.
 654 Baumer (1973, p. XVI).
 655 Curtius (1941, p. 1). [See also Curtius (1953, pp. 70, 79–105) for a discussion of this term.]
 656 Zwettler (1978, pp. 212 ff.); cf. p. 90.
 657 Ibn Raṣīq al-Qayrawānī (1972a, vol. 1, pp. 186–189, here p. 186).
 658 To understand his concept (and that of his predecessors) of *qasīdah* (ode) and *gīṭah* (short poem), the context of the entire chapter in Ibn Raṣīq's book has to be taken into account.
 659 Muṣṭī (1908, vol. 3, p. 233 f.); cf. Muṣṭī (1928, p. 283 f.); and Blachère (1952–1966, pp. 91 ff.).
 660 Zwettler (1978, p. 85 f.); Ibn Qutaybah (1947, p. XXXI f. and p. 59, n. 60); Bräunlich (1937, p. 221); Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 27 f.). Cf. Chapter 3, pp. 66–67.
 661 Zwettler (1978, p. 206).
 662 See pp. 104.
 663 Bräunlich (1937, p. 220 f., 265).
 664 Zwettler (1978, pp. 86 ff., especially p. 87).
 665 al-Ḡuṣṣānī (1965, p. 16).
 666 On these four *rawis*, see Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, pp. 131, 357 f., 348, and 408). Suffice it to say that only two *Mufallaḡah* (suspended ode) poets seem to have had known transmitters: Zuhayr and al-A'ṣā. Cf. Sezgin 1967–, vol. 2, pp. 109–132). Of them, only the two *rawis* of Zuhayr became famous poets in their own right, namely Ka'b ibn Zuhayr and al-Huṭay'ah; al-A'ṣā's *rawi* was not a poet (as al-Ḡuṣṣānī's remark above shows). Thus, it seems to be the exception rather than the rule that *all* members of the well-known chain of transmitters Aws—Zuhayr—Ka'b, etc. were poets. In addition, the phrase *igāmara la-hu 's-sīr wa-r-rīwāyah* ("in his case, poet and transmitter were one person"; see Sezgin 1967–, vol. 2, p. 22, n. 7 and the references listed there) seems to suggest that the combination of both functions was regarded as something special which deserved extra emphasis.
 667 Blachère (1952–1966, pp. 86–107).
 668 For the following discussion, see Wagner (1958, pp. 308–326, especially pp. 310 and 317) and Schoeler (1978, pp. 327–339). In addition, Wagner's edition of the *diwān* contains a valuable critical apparatus.
 669 Some examples: Abū Nuwās (1982, p. 26, no. 32) = al-'Abbās ibn al-Aḥnaf (1373/1954, p. 33, no. 47); Abū Nuwās (1988, p. 139 f., no. 107) = Ibn ad-Dāḥiḥ (1960, p. 61); Abū Nuwās (1988, p. 170 f., no. 138) = Ibn al-Mu'tazz (1945, p. 93, no. 125) (two verses less than Abū Nuwās); Abū Nuwās (1988, p. 302, no. 265) = Ibn al-Gāhm (1369/1949, p. 181, no. 92) (minus two verses).
 670 An example can be found in Schoeler (1978, p. 332 f.).
 671 An example: Schoeler (1978, pp. 337 ff.).
 672 One example: Abū Nuwās (1982, p. 103, no. 135, l. 6 and 8) (translated in Schoeler, 1978, p. 338, v. 3 f.) = Abū Nuwās (1958, p. 49, l. 14 and p. 50, l. 1). Both these verses occur a third time in Abū Nuwās (1982, p. 318, no. 266, l. 10, and 12).
 673 Cf. Wagner (1958, p. 308). He points out that in early 'Abbāsīd times, the concept of *rawi* was modified and extended.
 674 See Wagner (1958, pp. 309 ff., especially p. 310). Incidentally, the transmission of Greek tragedies is another example of the emergence of a profusion of variants etc. in a genre of *literary* poetry. Its literary life took place primarily in its oral recitation (and performance) and its contemporaneous written transmission was not subject to philological control. As we know, the orator Lycurgus around 330 BCE arranged that the tragedies of the three great tragedians were collected in the so-called "state

copy" in order to "curb the increasingly frequent changes in the text, especially by actors" (Schwinge, 1970, p. 291). We should also bear improvised comedy in mind: here, the dialog and the elaboration of the improvisation was left to the actor, so that each performance represented a different "version." Thus, one could justifiably call improvised comedy "oral poetry," but it is certainly not "oral poetry" according to the criteria of Parry/Lord.

675 For ancient Arabic poetry, see an example by Heinrichs (1974, p. 121). Examples for early 'Abbasid poetry can be found in Schoeler (1978, pp. 329 ff.).

676 We do not need to discuss the viability of the method proposed by Monroe (1972, p. 42). It was already called into question by Zwettler (1978, p. 233 f., n. 125).

677 Zwettler (1978, p. 223 f.).

678 See Sezgin (1967–, vol. 2, p. 133 f.) and the additional references he lists.

679 Cf. Blachère (1952–1966, p. 99, 105 ff.); Ahlwardt (1872, p. 15 f.).

680 Ahlwardt (1872, p. 15).

681 Fortunately, we have an article on the state of the field (together with a comprehensive bibliography on the subject), Canova (1977). As we are informed by the author (p. 222), only a single Arabist to date has attempted to apply the Parry/Lord theory to an Arabic folk epic: Connolly (1973, pp. 18–21). Connolly's research can only be a first step.

682 Lane (1860, pp. 391–425). He reports that those reciting the *Abū Zayd* epic were the *š'arāṭ* (poets; p. 391), and those reciting the *Širā' az-Zāhir* (*The Life of az-Zāhir*) were called *muhaddithin* (narrators; p. 400). In accordance with their subject matter, reciters of the *ʿAṭar* epic were named *ʿandīre* or *ʿandīriye* (p. 414).

683 See Paníček (1970, p. 9).

684 On the style of an Arabic folk epic, cf. Paníček (1970, p. 102–120). The author, who is as yet unfamiliar with the Parry/Lord theory (!), makes the following comment about formulae and stereotypical themes (p. 102):

The frequency of stereotypical phrases and whole sentences [sc. which are repeated] shows that the work was orally transmitted. They make the narrator's work easier. Furthermore, in the composition [sc. of the work] a number of schematic situations can be found, e.g. battle descriptions.

685 Lane (1860, p. 391 f.). On the audience of the Serbo-Croat epics, cf. Lord (1960, pp. 14–17) and others. In both traditions, the coffee house as the location and the nights of Ramaḍān as the time of the performances play a prominent role.

686 Paníček (1970, p. 8). The situation was similar in the case of the *Arabian Nights*: originally, it was a storybook translated from Middle Persian into Arabic. It was soon adopted by folk narrators, who—in a process spanning several centuries and taking place in a number of countries—adapted and recast the stories, suppressed parts of the original material, and, in their stead, extended it by adding stories from a variety of sources, etc. From probably early on, the narrators kept notebooks, in which they recorded in writing this or that version of a story or even whole sequences of stories. It was probably these notebooks, together with texts transmitted exclusively in writing, which were the source for the written redactions extant today. On this subject, see the (albeit somewhat vague) remarks by Gerhardt (1963, pp. 39–64, especially pp. 39 ff.). The problem requires to be studied in more detail.

687 This is my own impression received during my work cataloguing the Berlin Arabic manuscripts, but also by studying the relevant descriptions in the more detailed manuscript catalogues. Flügel (1865, p. 6, no. 783) distinguishes between "copies [sc. of the *ʿAṭar* romance] intended for coffee houses" and "good, old" copies and talks about "copies for public performance," which "are spread over a random number of notebooks."

688 See n. 682.

689 Lane (1860, p. 380).

690 Sālih (1956). The book is not available to me, but quoted by Canova (1977, p. 214) and Paníček (1970, p. 8).

691 Lord (1960, pp. 124–138), Chapter 6, "Writing and Oral Tradition."

692 Heath (1988, p. 149).

693 Cf. the discussion and negative verdict in standard works of the late 1980s such as Wagner (1987–1988, vol. 1, pp. 21 ff.), Jacobi (1987, p. 21 f.), and also Heath (1988, p. 164, n. 2).

694 The following articles are particularly important: Matlock (1971–1972); Bloch (1989); and Bauer (1993a,b).

695 Cf. p. 98.

696 Cf. p. 98.

697 Bloch (1989, p. 111).

698 Bloch (1989, p. 97); he adopts this observation from Goldziher. Cf. also Bonebakker (1986, p. 369, n. 6).

699 Bloch (1989, p. 105, 107 f.).

700 Ahlwardt (1870, p. 118, no. 4, v. 46).

701 Ahlwardt (1870, p. 92, no. 15, v. 21).

702 al-A'sā al-*ḥabir* (1950, no. 2, v. 46).

703 al-Asma'ī (1967, no. 44, v. 8) = al-Mufaḍḍal ad-Dabbī (1921, p. 71, l. 8).

704 Ahlwardt (1870, p. 44, no. 20, v. 21).

705 Ġarīr and al-Aḥīal (1922, p. 145, l. 7 = no. 45, v. 29).

706 Ahlwardt (1870, p. 92, no. 15, v. 9).

707 al-Ḥansā' (1895, p. 1, v. 5); rhyme: *-ābā*.

708 Bloch (1989, p. 97).

709 Bauer (1993a, p. 129).

710 Bauer (1993a, pp. 132 f., 120 f.).

711 Cf. above on p. 102.

712 Schippers (1980, p. 366).

713 Finnegan (1977).

714 Kilpatrick (1982, especially p. 146 f.).

715 Socin (1900–1901).

716 Musil (1908, 1928).

717 Sowayan (1985).

718 On p. 102.

719 Sowayan (1985, p. 191 ff.).

720 Sowayan (1985, p. 110 f.).

721 Sowayan (1985, p. 186).

722 Sowayan (1985, p. 111).

723 Sowayan (1985, p. 186); cf. pp. 95–96.

724 Sowayan (1985, p. 101); cf. p. 94 and Chapter 3, p. 66.

725 Sowayan (1985, p. 186); cf. p. 95.

726 Sowayan (1985, p. 101).

727 Sowayan (1985, p. 186).

728 Sowayan (1985, p. 104).

729 Sowayan (1985, p. 187).

730 Sowayan (1985, p. 106); cf. Chapter 3, p. 64 with n. 357.

731 Sowayan (1985, p. 207).

732 Kuipershoek (1994–2002).

733 Kuipershoek (1994–2002, vol. 1, p. 165, no. 21).

734 Pointed out to me by Prof. W. Heinrichs, Harvard University.

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